the weekly Standard

OCTOBER 16, 2006

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SEX & THE SINGLE CONGRESSMAN

KRAUTHAMMER • KRISTOL

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THE SIXTH YEAR SLUMP

BY Noemie Emery

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Americans spend over one million dollars on energy every minute.

So who has the power to change that?

Because of surging economies in the developing world and continued growth among the industrialized nations, global energy use is climbing. As a result, supplies are tight. Prices are rising. And energy users are calling for viable alternatives.

The good news is we've got a huge source of alternative energy all around us. It's called conservation, and it's the lowest cost new source of energy we have at hand. A reduction of just 5% of global energy use would save us the equivalent of over 10 million barrels of oil a day. Clearly, saving energy is like finding it. So how do we do it?

Incorporating energy efficient technology into new construction could reduce consumption by 40%. Governments and businesses must reduce their own energy use and promote conservation to their citizens and employees. Further improvements in fuel efficiency will play a crucial role, too. And the average person wields incredible power when it comes to conserving energy, from driving slower to switching to more efficient home appliances.

Of course, not only does using less energy mean there's more fuel to go around, it also means fewer greenhouse gas emissions. The fact is, if everyone began conserving today, we'd see results immediately. We've taken some of the steps needed to get started but we need your help to get the rest of the way.

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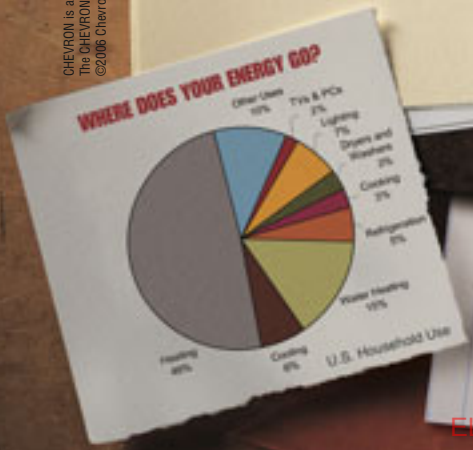

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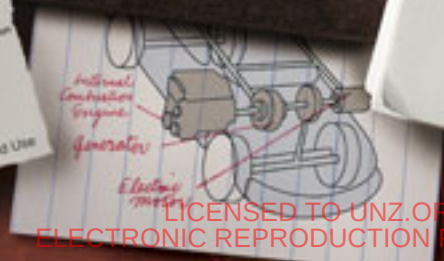

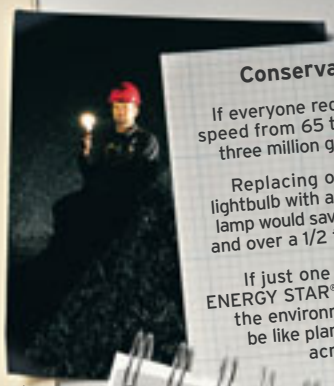

Conservation Facts:

If everyone reduced their driving speed from 65 to 55 mph, we'd save three million gallons of gas a day.

•

Replacing one incandescent lightbulb with a compact fluorescent lamp would save 500 pounds of coal and over a 1/2 ton of CO_2 emissions.

•

If just one in 10 homes used ENERGY STAR®– qualified appliances, the environmental benefit would be like planting 1.7 million new acres of trees.

Chevron Steps Taken:

Saving our own energy:

- Since 1992, Chevron has improved energy efficiency by 24%
- We use cogeneration technology at our refineries to produce additional electricity from otherwise wasted energy

Saving other people's energy:

Chevron Energy Solutions is a separate, proven business dedicated to energy efficiency. Success stories include:

- Improvements that will lower the Northern CA postal service's electricity spending by 46%
- Helping the U.S. government save taxpayers $151 million while reducing greenhouse gas emissions by an expected 1.5 million tons

Chevron

Human energy

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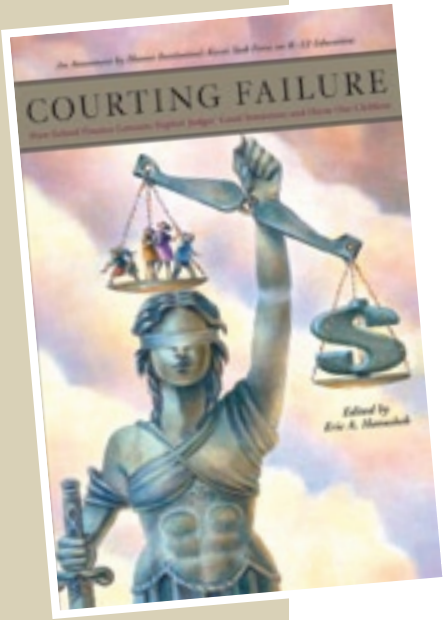
New from Education Next Books

An Assessment by Hoover Institution's Koret Task Force on K–12 Education

EDUCATION next BOOKS

School Funding Adequacy and the Courts



Courting Failure

How School Finance Lawsuits Exploit Judges' Good Intentions and Harm Our Children

EDITED BY ERIC A. HANUSHEK

Lawsuits over the adequacy of school financing have appeared in a majority of states, but no evidence about their potential impact on students has been available. *Courting Failure* assesses recent court actions in school adequacy lawsuits and their impact on student outcomes and shows that judicial actions regarding school finance have in fact not had a beneficial effect on student performance.

Contrary to popular belief, added school resources appear neither necessary nor sufficient to ensure high-quality schools. The essays in *Courting Failure* reveal that simply throwing more resources at the schools has not brought about a solution—and may even be exacerbating the problems. The legal and policy presumptions of the adequacy lawsuits do not hold up to analysis. The expert contributors to this volume call for more-realistic changes centered around accountability, incentives, and more-informed parents and policymakers.

Eric A. Hanushek is the Paul and Jean Hanna Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution and is a member of the Koret Task Force on K–12 Education. He serves as a member of the board of directors of the National Board for Education Sciences.

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Can you really teach college kids to use credit wisely?

Apparently so.

At Visa, we understand that college students are at particularly high risk of running into problems with credit card debt. That's why we asked the educators who developed Practical Money Skills for Life, our award-winning educational program, to create a special curriculum for college kids. And the evidence suggests it's working.

In a recent study by Wells Fargo, first-time cardholders in college took Practical Money Skills for Life lessons and quizzes designed to increase awareness of the importance of building solid credit. The results were striking: The students who took the Practical Money Skills for Life lessons and quizzes had 42.6% fewer late fee instances than students who didn't, incurred 42.6% fewer over-limit charges and kept a revolving balance that was 26.5% lower.

But Practical Money Skills for Life isn't just about credit. The program includes a wealth of practical advice about financing college and saving on college-related expenses. Students learn how to apply for loans, and about the wide range of scholarships available. They learn about everything from buying used textbooks to choosing a calling card to save money when phoning home. The Practical Money Skills for Life website even includes a college cost calculator to help people budget properly and avoid financial surprises.

Practical Money Skills for Life is a comprehensive program that gives people the skills to handle not just college, but life after college–including getting their first job, marrying, having a baby and retiring. Because responsible financial management is a lifelong commitment. And at Visa, we believe it's in everyone's interest that people manage their money and their credit wisely.

For more information visit us at www.practicalmoneyskills.com

Practical Money Skills for Life™

VISA

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BPA INTERNATIONAL

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The Greenhouse Effect

In June, Linda Greenhouse, the *New York Times*'s veteran Supreme Court beat reporter, visited the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University, where she accepted the 2006 Radcliffe Institute Medal. As part of the ceremony, Greenhouse (Radcliffe '68) delivered a lachrymose speech entitled "A Bridge Over Troubled Water" in which she related the story of how, shortly after the Iraq war began, she went to a Simon & Garfunkel concert—"two of my favorite musicians from my college days"—and, as the duo sang the chorus of "America"—"the one about the two kids riding through the night on a Greyhound bus"—burst into tears.

Now, don't get me wrong, Greenhouse told her audience, "I'm not a person who bursts into tears at the drop of a hat." And yet she cried throughout the second half of the show. This caused her much consternation, and Greenhouse thought for a while about what had moved her so. Finally, she realized it. Even though, back when she was in college, "there were many things that divided my generation," including "how actively we should commit ourselves to the great causes of civil rights and the antiwar movement," most everyone she knew, at least, was "absolutely united in one conviction: the belief that in future decades, if the world lasted that long, when our turn came to run the country, we wouldn't make the same mistakes" as the previous generation.

Not true, Greenhouse realized that night at the concert, as the unfolding war in Iraq made abundantly clear. "Our generation had not proved to be the solution. We were the problem." What's more, "my little crying jag" was before "we knew the worst of it": before we knew "the extent to which our government had turned its energy and attention away from upholding the rule of law and toward creating law-free zones at Guantanamo Bay, Abu Ghraib, Haditha and other places around the world." Not to mention the "sustained assault on women's reproductive freedom" and the "hijacking of public policy by religious fundamentalism" and—

You get the idea. Truth be told, there wasn't much surprising in Greenhouse's speech, which went on for another 1,500 self-indulgent words, though the talk was particularly revealing of the sort of platitudes and clichés that pass for conventional wisdom at the *Times*. What's surprising is that it took so long for a reporter to ask Greenhouse whether she thought it was a little, you know, biased for her to report on the Supreme Court while it rules on cases pertaining to, say, the "sustained assault on women's reproductive freedom."

The first questions came two weeks ago, when National Public Radio ran an article on Greenhouse's speech, and once more on October 2, when the *Washington Post*'s Howard Kurtz asked Greenhouse about her talk. Couldn't you impute bias to someone with such outspoken opinions, Kurtz asked? No, not at all, Greenhouse replied. Her musings in the speech were all "statements of fact."

There's not too much new here, really. Greenhouse is, after all, the reporter who was rebuked by her bosses for participating as a protester in a 1989 abortion-rights march on the Supreme Court—at the same time she was covering the Court as a supposedly dispassionate professional reporter. Of course, those same bosses didn't remove her from the beat, thus proving that it was her biases that recommended her to them in the first place. They simply were embarrassed she hadn't kept those biases better concealed. ♦

Meet the Christian Left

The Scrapbook is watching with pained interest as the left continues to try to recover a religious vocabulary. An email the other day from Jim Wallis's sanctimonious outfit *Sojourners* contained all the usual sermons denouncing the vulgarians of the religious right who try to identify God with a particular political ideology. Then we scrolled further down and came across an ad pitching a variety of religious left paraphernalia. Here are some of the bumper sticker and T-shirt designs:

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Something tells us that the religious left's antibigotry message may need a little refining. ♦

Even the Good News Is Bad

A blogger known as "Sensible Mom" noticed a curiously downbeat headline in the *Chicago Tribune* last week heralding the new record high for the Dow Jones Industrial average: "As Dow Surges, Many Left Behind."

How, she wondered, had the *Tribune* covered the last such Dow breakthrough in 2000 when Bill Clinton and not the hated Bush was in the White House? Wonder no more: "Guess what I found?" she writes. "An article with a very different tone. Starting with the exciting headline, 'Bull Market Spreading the Wealth in America.'"

Welcome to our world, Sensible Mom. ♦

Giving the Oldest Profession Its Due

Being a member of the European Union is not always fun and games. For instance, if your country's budget deficit rises by more than 3 percent each year, Brussels can subject you to some pretty stiff fines. Greece could have been one of those countries if not for a stroke of genius: By taking into account earnings from the black market, the Greek government will be increasing its reported GDP by 25 percent to roughly 194 billion euros. The increase thereby has the effect of shrinking the budget deficit well below the E.U.'s 3 percent limit. Yet more genius from the land of Socrates and Plato!

As the head of the national statistics service, Manolis Kontopyrakis, told Reuters, "The revised GDP will include some money from illegal activities, such as money from cigarette and drinks smuggling, prostitution and money laundering."

Brussels remains skeptical of the move, but it seems clear to us that the Greek government simply wants to be sure it counts every single hard-earned euro, from Athens to Crete to Santorini and even Lesbos. ♦

The Great Depression

You might have noticed the full-page ads for the Depression Is Real coalition in recent issues of this magazine (visit *DepressionIsReal.org* to find out more about the coalition's important campaign).

Prophetically, these ads began running in our September 25 issue, two full weeks before the news of ex-congressman Mark Foley's extracurricular activities plunged the Republican party and conservatives nationwide into a deep funk. Inquiring minds want to know: What did the coalition know, and when did they know it? ♦

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Casual

Down and Out at 12th and G

The last of the grand old Washington department stores, Hecht's, disappeared a couple of weeks ago, all of its properties being rebranded as Macy's stores. It was, the *Washington Post* intoned, the "end of an era." I, for one, was not overcome with nostalgia at the passing of Hecht's. Indeed, I smirked when I heard the news. Hecht's, you see, once denied me credit.

Younger friends laugh upon hearing this, and from the look of disbelief on their faces I gather I may have been the last person in America to fill out a charge card application and be turned down, and by a department store, no less. They wouldn't tell me why, but encouraged me to apply again in a few weeks.

The year was 1985, and I was new to Washington, which was no doubt part of the problem. Another problem: I was 24 years old and had never had a credit card, which even two decades ago must have marked me as a cannibalistic humanoid underground dweller or some other disreputable alien life form. Nowadays I hear they issue you your first credit card in the maternity ward, along with the birth certificate. Or, failing that, you can randomly fill out one of the 10 to 12 credit card come-ons deposited in every American mailbox on a daily basis. But some of us used to get by without plastic, in what was quaintly known as the cash economy.

Or, in my case, the beg-and-barter economy, as I was chronically short on cash. I did have a new job but needed to make good on some personal IOUs, and so couldn't afford rent and was sleeping in my aunt's basement in Alexandria. This was my fifth address of the previous 12 months, and I guilelessly listed them all on the credit application, including the two different Y's in Manhattan where I had bunked (the YMCA on East 47th St. and the YMHA at 92nd and Lexington) as well as the sublet of a sublet I had shared with some Juilliard students in the shadow of the George Washington Bridge at 178th St.—a short walk from where Senator Alfonse D'Amato and U.S. District Attorney Rudy Giuliani would make an undercover crack buy the following summer. Apparently none of these credentials established me as a solid citizen in the eyes of the Hecht's Gradgrinds.

As the saying goes, I was living from paycheck to paycheck—except the saying is wrong. Anyone who has ever lived from paycheck to paycheck can attest that what you actually do is live from paycheck to 24 or 48 or 72 hours before the next paycheck—at which point, back in the pre-credit card, pre-ATM dark ages, considerable creativity was required to get by. Fortunately, I had just my own sorry self to support in those days. Many of the precise details now escape me—they say this is common in the event of trauma—but if I'm not mistaken, a man can live a week or more on a loaf of bread, a jar of peanut butter, and a six-pack of V8 juice without developing an aggravated case of scurvy, rickets, or beriberi.

Under the circumstances, why I even wanted a Hecht's credit card is a good question. Not having any money, I was constantly obsessing over it, doing sums in my head of the small amounts I would need to get through a day and still put something aside. It does rather kill the life of the mind. I was planning to move out of my aunt's basement once I had accumulated a month's rent for a deposit. Somewhere around $450 was what I needed to set myself up in a small studio apartment of my own. It had occurred to me, though, that no apartment is really worth living in that doesn't also have a color TV. The one I wanted was on sale at Hecht's for $300—with no money down and no payments for three months if you charged it to your Hecht's card. Here, I thought, was my express bus to the lower middle class. And then the driver had the nerve to boot me to the curb.

Of course, I can see now that my thinking wasn't too sound. I blame the peanut butter/V8 diet. I'll even grant that the underwriters in the Hecht's credit department probably knew what they were doing. But I've still got a grin on my face when I walk past the new Macy's.

Richard Starr

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Some say depression is all in your head. Well, that's right. And wrong. It's right because depression is in the head, or more precisely, the brain. In fact, we've seen how it destroys the connections between brain cells.

Depression Is Real.

But saying depression is all in your head is also wrong. There's nothing imaginary about depression. It's a serious, medical condition that affects every aspect of a person's health. And untreated depression kills thousands of Americans a year — through suicide and by intensifying the symptoms of life threatening illnesses such as cancer and heart disease.

Hope Is Real, Too.

Today, research has identified many of the biological and environmental factors that contribute to depression. And medical science has developed effective treatments that can restore brain cell connections and lead to recovery. These treatments save lives. Depression is real. Fortunately, hope is real, too. To get the facts, please visit us at DepressionIsReal.org.

[Dr. Paul Greengard 2000 Nobel Laureate in Medicine]

"Every year, without any treatment at all, thousands stop suffering from depression. Because it kills them."

DepressionIsReal.org

American Psychiatric Foundation | Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance | League of United Latin American Citizens | National Alliance on Mental Illness
National Medical Association | National Mental Health Association | National Urban League

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Bibles 'Placed By FDR'

The Scrapbook could have gone back much earlier—and higher up on the political ladder—than Dean Acheson to demonstrate how religion and politics once coexisted quite nicely in this country ("Back Before the Theocrats Took Over," Oct. 2). During World War II, the War Department distributed a copy of the Bible to every member of the armed forces, along with this message from President Franklin Delano Roosevelt: "As Commander in Chief, I take pleasure in commending the reading of the Bible to all who serve in the armed forces of the United States. Throughout the centuries, men of many faiths and diverse origins have found in the Sacred Book words of wisdom, counsel, and inspiration. It is a foundation of strength and now, as always, an aid in attaining the highest aspirations of the human soul."

Eric Fettmann
New York, N.Y.

Pope on the Waves

Even with the richness of Lee Harris's analysis of Pope Benedict XVI's Regensburg address in "Socrates or Muhammad?" (Oct. 2), more remains to be said about this remarkable document. Harris claims the pope did not "assail or attack modernity or the Enlightenment." This imputed moderation is at odds with Harris's bold (and perceptive) comparison of Benedict to Socrates, who would have brooked no such blinders. Benedict's English translator fails him: "[C]ritique of modern reason from within" is a misleading translation of a (dubious) interpretation of "*Selbstkritik der modernen Vernunft*," or "self-critique of modern reason." Benedict shows that this punning self-criticism is possible only by transcending the horizon of modern reason.

Also, Benedict's discussion of the various stages in "the dehellenization of Christianity" might better be understood as "three waves (*Wellen*)" of dehellenization or alienation from reason—thus recalling that other contemporary Socrates, Leo Strauss, who wrote of "three waves of modernity." There are remarkable parallels between

Strauss's and Benedict's categories, which deserve thoughtful consideration by all men of reason.

Ken Masugi
Washington, D.C.

Ivy Athletics

While I enjoyed Matthew Continetti's "George Allen Monkeys Around" (Oct. 2) about the senator of my former state (and hopefully not soon the former senator), there was an oversight on college athletics. Although Allen might have been recruited by Princeton football, he could not have been offered an athletic scholarship, as the Ivy League is renowned for its lack of athletic scholarships (and it shows on the football field).

Christopher A. Hartwell
Chicago, Ill.

Learned VMI Grads

As a 1954 liberal arts graduate of the Virginia Military Institute, I enjoyed Mark Bauerlein's "Saluting the Canon" (Sept. 18) about the teaching of the liberal arts at military schools. I was surprised and disappointed, though, that he did not mention VMI. The Institute was tied for number one among all public liberal arts colleges in *U.S. News*'s 2007 college guide. At any rate, the publicity is welcome for all liberal arts majors, and for lovers of literature, military or otherwise.

Perry Archer
Houston, Tex.

• • •

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A Tale of Two Ads

"It shocks the conscience. Congressional leaders have admitted covering up the predatory behavior of a congressman who used the Internet to molest children. For over a year, they knowingly ignored the welfare of children to protect their own power. For 17 years, Patty Wetterling has fought for tougher penalties against those who harm children. That's why she's demanding a criminal investigation and the immediate expulsion of any congressman involved in this crime and coverup."

—TV ad on behalf of Patty Wetterling, Democratic candidate in Minnesota's 6th Congressional District

"A call is placed from New York to a known terrorist in Pakistan. A terrorist plot may be unfolding. Should the government intercept that call or wait until the paperwork is filed? Nancy Johnson says: 'Act immediately. Lives may be at stake.' Liberal Chris Murphy says: 'No. Apply for a court warrant even if valuable time is lost.' Chris Murphy — wrong on security, wrong for America."

—TV ad on behalf of Nancy Johnson, Republican candidate for reelection in Connecticut's 5th Congressional District

There you have it. These TV ads in two competitive House races tell the story. Repelled by former Republican congressman Mark Foley's sexual overtures to congressional pages and ex-pages, and by the House GOP leadership's alleged failure to move aggressively against him? Vote Democratic. Worried about the Democrats' tendency to coddle jihadists? Vote Republican.

This is a choice that should work out fine for Republicans. Which is why Democrats and the media may look back on the frenzy about Foley as a tactical mistake. In a time of disturbing foreign news—apparent lack of progress in Iraq, North Korea's threat of a nuclear test, Pakistan's cutting a deal with al Qaeda, Iran's nuclear program chugging ahead—the assault on the Republicans focused on a disgraced and departed congressman and the unquestionably decent speaker of the House, Denny Hastert.

Foley is a creep. The House leadership might have stumbled in dealing with him. But even the *Washington Post* commented that Wetterling's ad "seriously overstates what is known about the actions of the House Republican leadership." Will voters really be convinced that Denny Hastert "knowingly ignored the welfare of children to protect [his] own power?" From what we know, Hastert didn't find out about Foley's lurid behavior until a week ago, and then Foley was quickly gone. And how exactly did ignoring Foley's behavior help protect GOP power? His district is a safe Republican seat (except now, when Republicans are stuck with Foley's name on the ballot).

The attempt to make Foley a key issue in this fall's election is flopping. It's not credible to tar a political party with the misdeeds of one person. Did Republicans, for example, even try to link Gary Condit to other Democratic candidates in 2002? Was anyone really interested in Condit's party affiliation? Of course not.

And voters aren't in Foley's. National polls taken last week were basically unchanged from pre-Foley polls—bad for the GOP, but not irredeemable. And in the two competitive House races in Florida districts near Foley's, where there was of course saturation coverage of the story, the Republican candidates happened to gain ground last week.

There's no roll call vote in which the parties split on the behavior of Mark Foley. But there have been recent votes in which the parties divided on terror interrogations and (in the House) eavesdropping. On interrogations: Virtually all Republicans voted for tough interrogations of terrorists, and more than three-quarters of Democrats voted against. On supporting the administration's program of warrantless surveillance: Republicans in the House voted 214-13 for, Democrats 177-18 against. The Nancy Johnson advertisement may oversimplify things, but it captures a basic difference between the parties. That's why it has been effective. Johnson has opened a sizable lead on her opponent since the ad started running.

Issues usually trump scandals. Americans like reading about scandals. They like watching *Desperate Housewives*. But voting is different from voyeurism. The Republican landslide of 1994 was helped along by earlier congressional scandals—but it was basically ideological, following a campaign focused on Clinton's health care plan, his tax hike, gays in the military, gun control, and the like.

After a few days of panic last week, House Republicans seem to have calmed down and to be dealing more effectively with the Foley aftershocks. Now they need to defend against the charge that they don't care about sexual predators, and attack the Democrats for unjustly impugning their honor. Then they can get back to the issues—terror and taxes—where the parties really are distinct.

And if the media and the Democrats want to remain sex-obsessed? It might not be amiss for Republican candidates to remind the electorate which of the two parties has, shall we say, a more "nuanced" view of sexual scandal. Which party continued to accept Rep. Gerry Studds as a member in good standing for a decade after his sexual liaison with a 17-year-old page? Which party worships at the altar of an even more famous abuser-of-his-position-of-power-for-sexual-favors—Bill Clinton? Not the Republicans.

—William Kristol

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A New Page in an Old Book

A short history of congressional dalliances.

BY PHILIP TERZIAN

FIRST, LET'S DISPENSE with formalities and come to quick agreement on the gathering scandal of Rep. Mark Foley, R-Fla., whose lascivious emails and instant messages to House pages have Washington in thrall. The Foley epistles are "abhorrent" (House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi), "repulsive" (Speaker Dennis Hastert), and "repugnant" (Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid). And like President Bush, we too are "shocked," "dismayed," "disgusted," and "disappointed" by Foley's behavior.

Now, having said that, let us put things in perspective. For as much fun as the Foley affair has been for the press—and for Democrats, who had feared an October Surprise of another sort just a few weeks short of the mid-term elections—it is really a garden-variety congressional sex scandal. It may yet prove fatal to the House Republican leadership, as well as to the GOP majority in the House; but there is no compelling evidence of cosmic significance, nor apparent conspiracy to thwart justice. It is simply another instance of a fundamental truth: In any random selection of 435 members of the House of Representatives, a handful are likely to be lowlifes and perverts.

There is, however, a paradox in all this. If we look backward in time—say, over the past three decades—to count up previous congressional sex scandals, and then compare the figures to three decades before *that*, we are likely to conclude that the moral climate on Capitol Hill has fallen on a swift, and relentlessly downward, course. But that would be misleading. Since the early days of the Republic, Congress has contained its portion of pedophiles, fanny-pinchers, drunken rapists, and predatory gay men. It's just that they weren't called "gay" in the middle 19th century, and until very modern times, congressional sexual misbehavior was largely kept out of the news.

The paradox is that, as the popular culture has become more tolerant of sexual license, the reaction to congressional misconduct has grown disproportionately shrill. We can certainly agree that Foley's emails to youthful House employees make for stunning reading, and that he should have been disciplined by his colleagues at the very least. But it is also true that there is no evidence Foley realized the scenarios he typed on his computer, or threatened any of his reluctant correspondents. And as the late Mayor Jimmy Walker of New York once said, in a different context: "No woman was ever ruined by a book."

Modern congressional sex scandals fall into two principal categories: Members making fools of themselves; and members using their exalted status to prey on subordinates or extract favors. The model for the former category is one of the first, and most memorable, modern instances of mortification: the Wilbur Mills/Fanne Foxe Affair. In October 1974, Rep. Wilbur Mills, D-Ark., chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee and a 1972 Democratic presidential candidate, was stopped in the middle of the night near the Jefferson Memorial in Washington. While Mills and the officer conversed, his passenger, an Argentine-born stripper called Fanne Foxe, bolted from Mills's car and inexplicably jumped into the waters of the nearby Tidal Basin.

The episode might have ended on that surreal note, but a few weeks after Mills's reelection in November, he followed Ms. Foxe on tour and appeared with her onstage, manifestly drunk, at a Boston strip club (where for $3,500 a week she was performing as the "Washington Tidal Basin Bombshell"). That was too much for his Democratic colleagues in Washington, who forced Mills to resign as committee chairman. (He retired after the 1976 election.)

This was an instructive incident for two reasons: It was one of the first times that the private conduct of a member of Congress was held up to public scrutiny, and Wilbur Mills deployed alcoholism as an excuse for his behavior. This is now such a familiar expedient to evade responsibility—Mark Foley has claimed not only alcoholism but also an adolescent episode of molestation at the hands of a clergyman—that it is startling to recall its recent origins.

The second category might best be described by the case of Rep. Wayne Hays, D-Ohio, a coarse, bullying chairman of the House Administration Committee, who was found, in 1976, to employ a young woman in his congressional office (at taxpayers' expense) who could neither type nor take dictation—"I can't even answer the phone"—and whose main responsibility was to have sexual intercourse with Congressman Hays. Elizabeth Ray, an amiable country girl whose life's ambition was to appear in *Playboy*, briefly exploited her sudden notoriety, but was mainly (if passively) instrumental in forcing

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Hays to quit his chairmanship and lose his next primary election.

Over the years there have been instances of serial boorishness (Senators Bob Packwood, R-Ore., and Brock Adams, D-Wash., Rep. Gus Savage, D-Ill.), borderline pedophilia (Reps. Mel Reynolds, D-Ill., Donald Lukens, R-Ohio, Fred Richmond, D-N.Y.), and embarrassing indiscretion (Sen. Charles Robb, D-Va., Reps. Jon Hinson, R-Miss., Robert Bauman, R-Md., Allan Howe, D-Utah, and Gary Condit, D-Calif.). But two famous spectacles have some relevance for Mark Foley.

In 1989, it was revealed that Rep. Barney Frank, D-Mass., describing himself as "Hot Bottom," had advertised in a newspaper for a new lover, and acquired the companionship of a prostitute named Steve Gobie, who transformed Frank's Washington apartment into a brothel. The *Boston Globe* called on Frank to resign, but he resisted its entreaties, and Frank's Democratic colleagues neither expelled nor censured him. He was later reprimanded by the House for fixing Gobie's parking tickets and has since been reelected by ever-lengthening margins.

Six years before that, it was learned that Reps. Daniel Crane, R-Ill., and Gerry Studds, D-Mass., had enjoyed "sexual relationships" with 17-year-old congressional pages. Crane's indiscretion, which took place in 1980, involved a female; Studds's, in 1973, involved a male. But whereas Crane tearfully apologized to the House, and was defeated for reelection the following year, Studds neither apologized nor disturbed his Massachusetts constituents: They reelected him seven times until his retirement in 1996. The affair between the 17-year-old boy and the 36-year-old Studds had been "consensual," Studds explained.

The moral, of course, is that it is better to be a carnivorous congressman from Massachusetts than from Florida or Illinois, and that the quality of congressional sexual misconduct has much to do—surprise!—with politics. ♦

Sex Scandals and Double Standards

Two parties, two pages, two different outcomes.

BY CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER

In 1983, Representative Gerry Studds, Democrat of Massachusetts, admitted to having sex with a 17-year-old male page. He was censured by the House of Representatives. During the vote, which he was compelled by House rules to be present for, Studds turned his back on the House to show his contempt for his colleagues' reprimand. He was not expelled from the Democratic Caucus. In fact, he was his party's nominee in the next election in his district—and the next five after that—winning reelection each time. He remained in the bosom of the Democratic Caucus in the House for the next 13 years.

In 2006, Republican congressman Mark Foley was found to have been engaged in lurid sexual Internet correspondence with a 16-year-old House page. There is no evidence yet of his ever laying a hand on anyone, let alone having sex with a page. When discovered, he immediately resigned. Had he not, says Republican House Speaker Dennis Hastert, "I would have demanded his expulsion." Not only is Foley gone, but half the Republican House leadership has been tarred. Hastert himself came within an inch of political extinction.

Am I missing something? There seems to be an odd difference in the disposition of the two cases. By any measure, what Studds did was worse. By any measure, his treatment was infinitely more lenient.

Moreover, in the case of Studds, I do not recall demands for investigations of the Democratic leadership about what they knew about Studds and when they knew it. Yet Hastert is pilloried for having not done something about Foley.

The usual explanation is that Republicans deserve extra scrutiny and punishment because of hypocrisy. They campaign ostentatiously for family values while undermining them in private. Foley, for example, was a founder and co-chairman of the House Caucus on Missing and Exploited Children.

True. Hypocrisy it is. And hypocrisy is certainly a vice. But is it a capital offense? Was Studds's perverse defiance about having sex with a 17-year-old page—as dramatized by his turning his back on the House during the censure vote—a virtue?

The other charge that seeks to generalize the crime is to cite the Foley affair as an example of the arrogance of power. I don't get this one either. There is arrogance in dealing with lobbyists like Jack Abramoff; in shamelessly trading earmarks in the dead of night; in holding up voting on the floor of the House (in violation of House rules) in order to turn the vote of a recalcitrant member. That's abuse of power. But Foley's actions were no more an example of arrogance of power than was the drunken Wilbur Mills watching his paramour, the stripper Fanne Foxe, jump into the Tidal Basin. Call it dalliance or deviance. It has nothing to do with arrogance.

As for the alleged arrogance of the House leadership, what was Hastert supposed to have done? Contrary to the impression given in initial press reports, in 2005 Hastert did not see the damning instant message traffic

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that brought Foley down. What he saw were emails that were not sexual or lurid, but merely inappropriately friendly.

What should Hastert have done? Gone public at a time when the parents had pleaded that the case not be made public? Out a gay member of Congress? Had Hastert gone public and reprimanded Foley, those now calling for his head for not protecting children would be condemning him for outing, harassing, and unfairly singling out a gay member of Congress.

In the calm light of day, Hastert's actions, while not exemplary, are defensible. This is not a time of calm, however. Republicans are panicking because the toxicity of the scandal is affecting them all. Democrats are salivating because they feel regaining the House is within their grasp. And the press is hyping because, well, this is just too good a story, a most unlikely election-eve dramatization of Edwin Edwards's immortal line: "The only way I can lose this election is if I'm caught in bed with either a dead girl or a live boy."

Studds retired from the House in 1996 after 24 years of service, the political equivalent of dying in your sleep. His last term was spent in the minority, as the Democrats two years earlier had lost control of the House. What, after 40 years, did them in? One factor was the House banking scandal. In the calm light of retrospection, it was a scandal of spectacular insignificance. Perhaps the Democrats deserved to lose the House for 40 years of imperial rule. But what finally helped bring them down was a few kited checks involving ridiculously small sums from a "bank" that was little more than a convenience store.

Unfortunately for them, it was the stuff of bumper stickers and talk show rants. Now perhaps it's the Republicans' turn to be felled by a similarly microcosmic event with plenty of guilt by association. But the Republicans can't complain. They know as well as anyone that the only justice in politics is the poetic kind. ♦

Is Foley's Seat Really Lost?

Even though his name remains on the ballot, a Republican might still win. BY DUNCAN CURRIE

Port St. Lucie, Florida

"This district does not want a John Kerry Democrat representing them in Congress," says Florida state legislator Joe Negron. We are standing outside the St. Lucie County GOP headquarters, and Negron, as usual, is in a hurry. After our chat he will dash off to sign the Americans for Tax Reform (ATR) no-new-taxes pledge. "I have a strong affiliation with ATR," says Negron, of the group run by Grover Norquist. During our conversation Negron repeatedly boasts that he is a "fiscal conservative."

The good news for Negron, 45, is that he is running for Congress in a heavily Republican district, Florida's 16th, which George W. Bush carried by 8 points in 2004, and where, according to a recent poll, likely GOP voters outnumber likely Democrats 47 percent to 32 percent. The bad news is that he has only five weeks to cobble together a campaign before November 7. He is taking the place of former Republican congressman Mark Foley, who resigned in disgrace, and under Florida election law, Foley's name must remain on the ballot. So Negron now has the unenviable task of convincing voters to pull the lever for "Mark Foley"—understanding that by doing so they'll actually be voting for Joe Negron.

He puts a brave face on all this: "I'd rather be in my position than in Tim Mahoney's position." Mahoney is his Democratic opponent, a self-made millionaire and political novice who until a few days ago had pretty dim prospects. After Foley's resignation he surged ahead. Negron is eager to paint Mahoney as a "liberal" Democrat in the mold of Senator Kerry, who has joined Mahoney in Florida to show his support. But that may be a harder sell than Negron thinks.

In an interview with the *Wall Street Journal* last week, Mahoney dubbed himself a "conservative Christian," cited Ronald Reagan as a political hero, opposed stricter gun control laws, and came out against the estate tax on family farms. His talk about restoring "integrity" to the office he seeks may strike a chord with angry Republicans and right-leaning independents. He also sounds hawkish on port security. And, of course, the 50-year-old investment banker will have plenty of money on hand: his own wealth plus the donations that have apparently been pouring in since Foley stepped down.

Negron once had his own fat campaign chest—but that was during an aborted run to be Florida's attorney general. He dropped out of the 2006 race to make way for former GOP congressman Bill McCollum, the eventual nominee, who Negron believed had superior name recognition and more experience. According to the South Florida *Sun-Sentinel*, Negron had raised over $1 million for that race, of which only $600,000 or so is available for his embryonic House campaign. "It's not yet money in the bank," reports the *Sun-Sentinel*. "Federal law requires funds raised for state races to be sent back to donors, who then decide whether to contribute to the federal race."

Duncan Currie is a reporter at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

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But Negron will enjoy robust support from the national GOP and from Florida Republicans, who quickly rallied around his candidacy after initial jostling over Foley's replacement. Governor Jeb Bush will campaign for Negron this week. (Negron once made headlines by endorsing Gov. Bush's role in the Terri Schiavo case. "The government should not stand by and allow a citizen to die of thirst," he told me last week.) "At first everyone thought it was gone," says a Florida GOP official of the Foley seat. "Now I think everybody's a lot more optimistic about things."

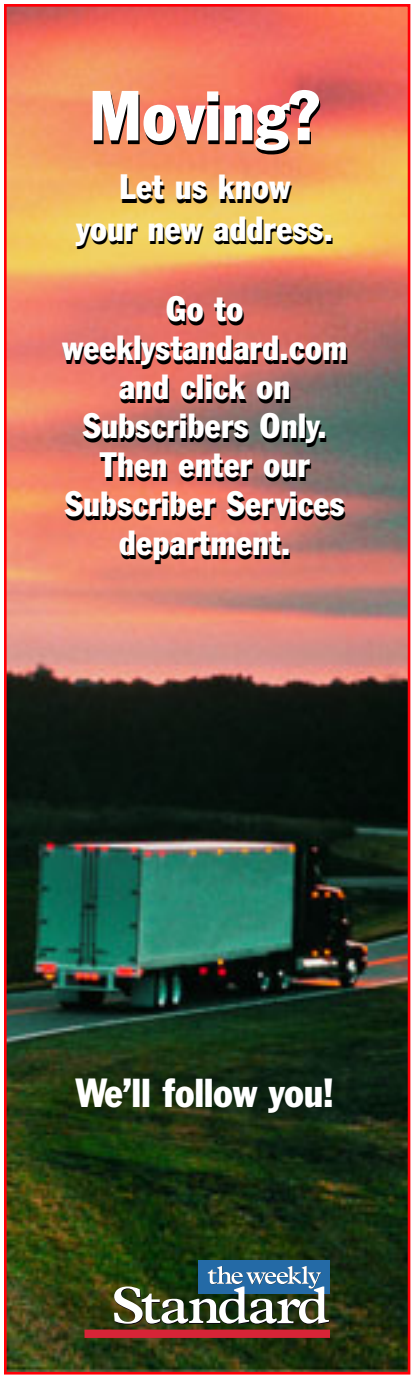
The irony is that Negron was once a Democrat and Mahoney a Republican. The *Los Angeles Times* reports that Mahoney switched parties just last year; Negron says he became a Republican in 1991. "I was very upset that the Republican party was on the wrong side of the civil rights movement," he told me. But when he graduated from Emory Law School in 1986 and returned home to Florida's so-called Treasure Coast, Negron says he was put off by the liberalism and Reagan-bashing of many fellow Democrats. He made his first bid for the Florida House of Representatives as a Democrat; his next two as a Republican. All three failed.

Negron finally won election to the Florida House in 2000, as a representative from the affluent Martin County town of Stuart. Florida's bizarrely shaped 16th District encompasses most of Martin County, one of Florida's more GOP-friendly areas, plus part or all of seven other counties. "According to state records reaching back to 1978," the *Palm Beach Post* reported last February, "just one Democrat has beat a Republican for a state House seat that included any part of Martin County."

As a legislator, Negron rose to the powerful position of state budget chairman, where he demanded profuse hurricane relief for his hometown region. Negron says this would also be a priority of his in Congress. "We need to have a national hurricane disaster fund." (How that squares with his professed "fiscal conservatism" is another matter.) He has reportedly impressed many Democrats in Tallahassee with his friendly demeanor and cooperative attitude.

Until last Tuesday, Negron was bogged down with jury duty, serving as the alternate in a local murder trial. Now his campaign is busy lobbying to have notices sent to absentee voters, and messages posted in voting booths, explaining that a vote for Foley is effectively a vote for Negron. Democrats are resisting, and as of last Friday the legal spat had not been settled.

It may be critical. Few doubt that, under normal circumstances, Negron would dispose of Mahoney in such prime Republican territory. (Foley won his last election, in 2004, by a whopping 36 points.) But now Democrats smell blood and feel the momentum of an anti-Foley backlash. The question is whether that will translate into an anti-Republican backlash—and whether Floridians in this district will understand just who they're voting for. ♦



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The State Dept. Was Right

To deny Tariq Ramadan a visa.

BY OLIVIER GUITTA

ON SEPTEMBER 20, the State Department denied a visa to Muslim scholar Tariq Ramadan on the grounds that he had contributed around 600 euros to a French charity classified as a terrorist organization since 2003 because of its relationship with the Palestinian terrorist group Hamas. This latest exclusion follows on the revocation of Ramadan's visa to live and work in the United States while teaching at Notre Dame in 2004, a step taken at the express request of the Department of Homeland Security. While the American Civil Liberties Union and the leftist literary group PEN, among others, present Ramadan as a moderate and accuse U.S. authorities of intolerance, the background and views of Tariq Ramadan suggest the government's move was entirely justified.

For starters, Ramadan is the grandson of Hassan al-Banna, founder of the Muslim Brotherhood, the highly influential Islamist organization born in Egypt in 1928. It was the Brotherhood that invented the now-familiar Islamist modus operandi of covert organization, assassination, and extremist theology. Its goal was to overthrow the Egyptian regime, install a fundamentalist Muslim government, and impose *sharia* (Islamic law) as the new constitution. Tariq's father, Said Ramadan, was a major figure in this organization, expelled from Egypt by Gamal Abdul Nasser for Islamist activity.

Said Ramadan took refuge first in Saudi Arabia, where he was a founder of the World Islamic League, one of the largest Saudi charities and global missionary groups. He then moved to Geneva, where in 1961 he created the Islamic Center, a combination mosque, think tank, and community center. The philosophy of the Muslim Brotherhood influenced a generation of wealthy Muslim kids, including Osama bin Laden. Interestingly, Said Ramadan also had U.S. connections: He had a close relationship with Malcolm X and was personal mentor to Dawud Salahuddin, a black convert to Islam who murdered an Iranian dissident, Ali Akbar Tabatabai, in Bethesda, Maryland, in 1980. After fleeing the United States, Salahuddin spent a few days in Geneva visiting Said Ramadan before taking refuge in Iran. Profiled in the *New Yorker* in 2002, Salahuddin confirmed that Ramadan remained his adviser and spiritual guide until Ramadan's death in 1995.

Said Ramadan was one of the most important Islamist thinkers of the 20th century. He is probably the author of "The Project," a 14-page document dated 1982 found by the Swiss secret service in 2001. "The Project" is a roadmap for installing Islamic regimes in the West by propaganda, preaching, and if necessary war. (It can be read at *www.frontpagemag.com/articles/readarticle.asp?ID=22416&p=1.*)

Tariq Ramadan was born in 1962 in Switzerland. After toying with a career as a professional soccer player, he settled into the family business as an Islamic scholar. He became a teacher of philosophy and theology in Swiss universities. Most European secret service agencies are convinced that, at the end of the 1980s, the Muslim Brotherhood chose Tariq Ramadan to be their European representative. In 1991, he went to Cairo to study with Islamist professors. Upon his return to Switzerland, he founded the Movement of Swiss Muslims. His objective was to reach Muslim youth by Islamizing modernity rather than modernizing Islam.

Charming and smooth, Ramadan holds out Islam as the solution to all the problems of Muslim youth—in keeping with the slogan of the Muslim Brotherhood, "Islam is the solution." The first indication of his fundamentalism came in 1993, when he lobbied to outlaw a play called *Mahomet*, being produced in Geneva, which represented the prophet in a light that did not fit with Ramadan's views. In 1995, Alaa el-Din Nazmi, an Egyptian Secret Service agent assigned to watch the Ramadan family, was murdered in Geneva. No one has been arrested for the crime.

Ramadan is also a pragmatist. When he realized that his Swiss venture was leading nowhere, he turned to France. There he won the support of one of the main Muslim organizations linked to the Brotherhood, the UOIF (*Union des Organisations Islamiques de France*), along with the main Muslim youth organization, the UJM (*Union des Jeunes Musulmans*). His notion of Islam as the solution was favorably received by many French Muslim youths and partly explains the radicalization of this community. But his popularity really took off when he threw in his lot with the antiglobalization crowd. Ramadan is an opportunist, and saw the appeal of this growing movement. Thanks to this alliance, he quickly became a media star in France.

By 2004 Ramadan was de facto spokesman of the French Muslim community, spending most of his time in Lyon, France's second-largest city, instructing the young Muslim population. His charisma and gift for public speaking made him a hit in the French suburbs, where high-rise public housing projects have become Islamic ghettos. Ramadan cultivated a "moderate" reputation by taking part in interfaith seminars and sitting on a

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commission on "Islam and Secularism." Indeed, some view him as a brilliant intellectual preaching a modern and tolerant Islam. The European Union has made him an adviser on religious issues.

But not all who know him are buying. One of Ramadan's interfaith partners, Fr. Christian Delorme, had this to say in 2001:

> I am today convinced—and it took me time to understand it—that Tariq Ramadan's thinking and actions are dangerous. I believe he is not at all a man of dialogue. He knows how to charm his audience, but in reality, he wants a total separation between Muslims and other communities. I am convinced that Tariq Ramadan deeply hates the West.

For all his interfaith zeal, an examination of Ramadan's work fails to turn up any positive discussion of Christianity or Judaism. He calls Arabs "my brothers and sisters" while addressing all others as "madam," "sir," or without any honorific. When Ramadan faced off with Nicolas Sarkozy, the French interior minister and presidential hopeful, in 2004 on French TV, he repeatedly called the minister "Sarkozy" instead of the usual "Mr. Sarkozy" or, as the French say, *monsieur le ministre*. During this debate, Sarkozy pressed Ramadan to condemn the stoning of adulterers, a form of capital punishment endorsed by his brother, Hani Ramadan, head of the Islamic Center in Geneva. Tariq declined to go beyond his previous call for a moratorium on corporal punishment and the death penalty while Islamic scholars study the matter.

More to the point, Ramadan has multiple links to terrorism. In 1995, in the midst of terrorist attacks in Paris orchestrated by the Algerian Islamist group GIA, Jean-Louis Debré, French interior minister, denied Ramadan entry to France because of his links to the group. According to Roland Jacquard, who runs a terrorism watchdog website, Ramadan is not directly involved in terrorist activities, but many of his supporters are. For example, Ramadan greatly influenced Djamel Beghal, a French citizen arrested for plotting to bomb the U.S. embassy in Paris and sentenced to 10 years in jail in March 2005. Sylvain Besson of the Swiss daily *Le Temps* quotes court papers showing that Beghal "was a speechwriter for Tariq Ramadan." Ramadan denies ever meeting Beghal, although Beghal was living in Leicester in 1998 while Ramadan was studying there.

Zuma Press / Ed Alcock

Tariq Ramadan

And Ramadan often speaks equivocally. Commenting on the September 11 attacks ten days after they occurred, he explained that one couldn't say for sure that bin Laden was behind them. He then asked, "Who profits from the crime?" noting that no Arab or Muslim cause was the better for it. This is an argument used by Islamist conspiratorialists who accuse Israel of perpetrating 9/11. In an interview with the French newsmagazine *Le Point*, Ramadan used the neutral term "interventions" when speaking of the major terrorist attacks in New York, Bali, and Madrid. And when asked recently by an Italian magazine whether car bombings against U.S. forces in Iraq were justified, he was quoted as saying: "Iraq was colonized by the Americans. Resistance against the army is just."

Ramadan's views about Israel are unsurprising: He strongly favors the elimination of the Jewish state. As one French DST (equivalent to the FBI) agent told the magazine *Le Nouvel Observateur*, Ramadan's long-term goal is to bring about the legal extinction of the state of Israel through a major Muslim lobbying campaign, first in Europe, then in the United States.

For her 2004 book *Brother Tariq*, Caroline Fourest, a French expert on Islamic fundamentalism, studied Ramadan's 15 books, 1,500 pages of interviews, and—most important—his 100 or so tapes, which sell tens of thousands of copies each year. Her conclusion: "Ramadan is a war leader." When an interviewer from the weekly *L'Express* asked Fourest how she could be so sure that Ramadan was indeed the "political heir of his grandfather," Hassan al-Banna, here's how she replied:

> Because I've studied his statements and his writing. I was struck by the extent to which the discourse of Tariq Ramadan is often just a repetition of the discourse that Banna had at the beginning of the 20th century in Egypt. He never criticizes his grandfather. On the contrary, he presents him as a model to be followed, a person beyond reproach, nonviolent and unjustly criticized because of the "Zionist lobby"! This sends chills down one's spine when one knows the extent to which Banna was a fanatic, that he gave birth to a movement out of which the worst Jihadis (like Ayman al-Zawahiri, the number 2 man of al Qaeda) have emerged,

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and that he wanted to establish a theocracy in every country having a single Muslim. Tariq Ramadan claims that he is not a Muslim Brother. Like all the Muslim Brothers . . . since it's a fraternity which is three-quarters secret. . . . A Muslim Brother is above all someone who adopts the methods and the thought of Banna. Ramadan is the man who has done the most to disseminate this method and this thought.

In response to her book, Ramadan calls Fourest an agent of Israel but doesn't refute her findings. Predictably, as soon as her book was published, an Islamist website threatened Fourest and posted her address and the pass code to get into her building.

Fourest is not the only one who has seen through Ramadan's game. Prominent moderate Muslims also accuse Ramadan of double talk. For instance, the head of the largest French antiracism association, *SOS Racisme*, Malek Boutih (an Arab Muslim), told Ramadan after talking with him at length: "Mr. Ramadan, you are a fascist."

But while the French have come to see Ramadan as one more Islamist, the British have honored him with a fellowship at Oxford University and, more important, a seat on the Blair government's committee tackling extremism. As one stunned European diplomat told Radio France Internationale, "It's like putting a diabetic in the middle of a pastry shop."

But Ramadan has learned from his mistakes and is taking ever greater pains to conceal his true identity. In fact, his writings over the past year have been almost above reproach: He has even gone so far as to criticize some of the excesses in the Muslim world after the pope's recent remarks about Islam.

Ramadan's stint in England has refurbished his credibility and given him a new start. This is handy, from his point of view, as the United Kingdom is the ideal launching pad from which to reach the main objective: For the Muslim Brotherhood, the big prize has always been the United States. ♦

He Huffs and He Puffs

North Korea's Dear Leader threatens to explode a nuke. BY DAN BLUMENTHAL

HERE WE ARE AGAIN. Kim Jong Il is doing what we have come to expect of him: threatening the world and engaging in nuclear brinkmanship. And this time the Dear Leader is declaring his regime's intention to test an actual nuclear weapon.

Last July, ignoring the warnings of the United States and other members of the six party talks, Kim Jong Il decided to test several short- and long-range missiles. No one besides our closest ally in Asia, Japan, seemed to care much, and the international response was far softer than what Tokyo proposed. Kim was slapped with sanctions prohibiting the sale of nuclear and missile materials. Japan went forward with its own broader unilateral sanctions, and, clearly dissatisfied with the international and American responses, mused aloud about the need for a nuclear-strike capability.

But all Kim Jong Il had to do was wait for the huffing and puffing to peter out. By September, Washington was offering Pyongyang one-on-one talks and "flexibility" on sanctions currently in place to keep North Korea from trafficking in counterfeit money. These sanctions have clearly hurt the cash-strapped regime, which lives off a combination of criminal activity and extorted foreign aid. And yet, Washington's concessions, apparently, were not good enough for the Dear Leader.

Kim has decided to up the ante and threaten to test a nuclear weapon. Another round of threats has ensued. A very provocative act, said Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. "Bad news," according to the E.U.'s Javier Solana. But why should Kim worry about consequences? U.S. and Japanese efforts to get the United Nations to express disapproval in advance of a test—a simple warning of Chapter 7 actions that could lead to tougher sanctions and the use of force—have already been rebuffed by North Korea's "protectors," as Ambassador John Bolton calls China and Russia.

Reasonable people may ask, Why is Kim escalating when he is so close to getting what he wants? There are plenty of possible motivations. Japanese prime minister Shinzo Abe is set to visit South Korea in October on a fence-mending trip. A Japanese-South Korean rapprochement would be a major blow to Kim's strategy of weakening America's Asian alliances. Perhaps Kim is peeved that Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and the Philippines joined Japan, South Korea, and the United States (Russia and China sat out) at a recent meeting in New York on the North Korean nuclear crisis. Maybe the paranoid leader is upset by signs that the U.S.-South Korea relationship may be fixable?

There is also the Iran factor. Kim and Mahmoud Ahmadinejad seem to be studying each other's moves. The Iranian president wants his own six party-like process, which would allow him also to build up his country's nuclear arsenal while extracting all the benefits of diplomacy with the big boys. Just like Kim. And it was soon after Iran was rewarded for its own provocations by an offer of goodies from the E.U. and America that Kim tested his missiles this summer. Perhaps Kim also desires the respect Ahmadinejad has received. The Iran-

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ian president got to speak in New York at the United Nations and the citadel of the foreign policy establishment, the Council on Foreign Relations. He was even on the cover of *Time*.

Of course, no one really knows what Kim is after, besides survival, which nuclear weapons will buy him for a while. But he has also learned that brinkmanship and escalation work. Why not continue and see what else he can get, especially from Seoul and Beijing?

The United States last week warned privately and publicly that "we are not going to live with a nuclear North Korea." But we have said that before, and we have been living with a nuclear North Korea for quite some time. Besides, what actions will we take to not "live with a nuclear North Korea"?

Proponents of more diplomacy argue that, had the United States pursued a more rigorous diplomacy, we could have convinced China and South Korea, once diplomacy failed, to support a more coercive approach. But Beijing's geopolitical calculation—a nuclear North Korea may not be so bad when compared with the alternative of a unified Korea allied with Washington—precludes getting tough with Kim. And the growing pains of South Korea's immature democracy have complicated Washington's attempts to work with it on the North Korea issue.

Even worse, the "more-diplomacy" argument overlooks the basic truth about our North Korea problem, which is that we *are* willing to live with a nuclear North Korea, because the alternative is a major war. In which case, our policy should be based on the premise that we will be living with a nuclear North Korea until the Kim regime is gone. Such a policy requires first getting ourselves out of the six party talks, so we can focus on defending ourselves and reassuring our nervous allies Japan and South Korea that our nuclear umbrella will protect them.

We also have other means of deterring the Dear Leader, mitigating his threats, and working toward his eventual demise. Unrelenting pressure can be put on the trade in illicit goods that keeps Kim's regime alive. We can adopt a more robust nuclear posture in Asia. We can mitigate the artillery threat to Seoul through counter-battery weaponry. We can intensify our Proliferation Security Initiative activities, and place a quarantine and inspection regime on ships moving to and from North Korea. We can also accelerate the deployment of missile defenses to our regional allies. We can launch an international campaign to ameliorate human rights abuses and absorb refugees, and so on.

But a continued policy of conference diplomacy and empty threats will give us the worst of all worlds: more nuclear weapons in North Korea and more alliance problems with South Korea and Japan. The lesson we should be teaching Pyongyang is that breaking your commitment to non-nuclearization leads not to concession after concession, but to isolation, pressure, and the uncomfortable position of having a nuclear arsenal pointed at you. ♦

What Would Lincoln Do?

A test for the Roberts Court.

BY RICHARD W. GARNETT & MICHAEL STOKES PAULSEN

THE ROBERTS COURT has begun its 2006-07 session, and already on the docket are hot-ticket cases involving the use of race in school admissions, the use of child-victim statements in criminal-abuse cases, and the federal government's obligation to regulate greenhouse gases. But the case that may define this term is the Court's reconsideration of the grisly practice known as partial-birth abortion.

For as long as Americans have known about the several thousand partial-birth abortions performed each year, they have—by comfortable and consistent margins—agreed with the late senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan that "[the procedure] is infanticide, and one would be too many."

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Nevertheless, the Supreme Court declared six years ago in *Stenberg* v. *Carhart* that Nebraska's effort to ban this particular late-term abortion method violated the right to abortion that was manufactured in the 1973 *Roe* v. *Wade* case.

Congress responded with a ban of its own, one that was designed to satisfy the standards set out in *Carhart*. But this effort, the federal Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act of 2003, has now been rejected by lower federal courts. The question before the Court now, in *Gonzales* v. *Carhart* and *Gonzales* v. *Planned Parenthood*, is whether the justices will permit us to regulate this procedure, which revolts Red and Blue America alike.

According to the editors of the *New York Times*, these cases are not so much a test of the justices' commitment to democratic self-government as they are a chance for the Court's "solidly conservative majority" to prove (to the *Times*) "what sort of conservatives they intend to be: those who issue rulings to match their personal ideology, or those who

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want to keep the court on a steady path by respecting precedent." During their confirmation hearings, the Court's newest members—Chief Justice John Roberts and Justice Samuel Alito—both professed humility and respect for precedent. The *Times* wants to know: Were they telling the truth?

In fact, the justices could probably uphold the federal ban without reversing the *Stenberg* decision. But they shouldn't. The Court's time and constitutional powers would be better spent, and the rule of law better served, if *Stenberg* were simply abandoned.

What about *stare decisis*, though? Don't the editors at the *Times* have a point when they urge deference to precedent? Of course they do. It is eminently sensible for courts to stick with settled decisions, absent special and strong justification. But the doctrine of *stare decisis*, properly understood, is not an inexorable command of blind, unquestioning adherence to the most recently decided case. It is not, as Justice Frankfurter once put it, the "imprisonment of reason." It is, instead, a principle of judicial policy, a flexible, practical idea that leaves plenty of room for discretion as to how it should be applied in any given set of circumstances.

Abraham Lincoln understood this well. In 1857, Lincoln was a candidate for the Senate. He was confronted often with the argument that *stare decisis* required deference to the Court's now-infamous decision in the *Dred Scott* case. The future president wasn't buying it:

> We believe . . . in obedience to, and respect for the judicial department of government. We think its decisions on Constitutional questions, when fully settled, should control, not only the particular cases decided, but the general policy of the country, subject to be disturbed only by amendments of the Constitution as provided in that instrument itself. More than this would be revolution. But we think the *Dred Scott* decision is erroneous. We know the court that made it has often overruled its own decisions, and we shall do what we can to have it to overrule this. . . .
>
> If this important decision had been made by the unanimous concurrence of the judges, and without any apparent partisan bias, and in accordance with legal public expectation, and with the steady practice of the departments throughout our history, and had been in no part based on assumed historical facts which are not really true; or, if wanting in some of these, it had been before the court more than once, and had there been affirmed and re-affirmed through a course of years, it then might be, perhaps would be, factious, nay, even revolutionary, to not acquiesce in it as a precedent.
>
> But when, as it is true, we find it wanting in all these claims to the public confidence, it is not resistance, it is not factious, it is not even disrespectful, to treat it as not having yet quite established a settled doctrine for the country . . .

Lincoln's response is both compelling and instructive. Sometimes, it may make sense for judges to defer to misguided precedents. This does not mean, though, that wrongheaded interpretations of the Constitution are exempt from reconsideration. It is no insult to the rule of law, and entirely consistent with *stare decisis*, to insist that judicial readings of the Constitution may be revisited and revised. Only when a decision has been "fully settled," through judicial reaffirmation and public acceptance, does it become a part of the fabric of the law. Remember, even though *Plessy* v. *Ferguson* (1896) was on the books, and followed by courts for more than a half a century, it remained deeply contested and thus unsettled. The Court's decision, in *Brown* v. *Board of Education* (1954), finally to reconsider and reject it was fully consistent with Lincoln's views.

Lincoln appreciated, as have the justices, that courts' decisions "are of greater or less authority as precedents, according to circumstances." He noted, for example, that "it is relevant whether the decision is one of extremely long standing, such that its rule has become entrenched in established practice." Similarly, the Court agrees that the force of precedent is strongest when public institutions, or private reliance interests, have grown up around a decision. It mattered to Lincoln whether a decision—particularly a relatively recent one—had commanded unanimous or near-unanimous support within the Court. And he thought it was important to ask whether a questionable decision had nevertheless been "affirmed and re-affirmed through a course of years." A lack of sustained judicial embrace of a questionable doctrine weighed heavily, in his view, against according that doctrine the strong deference of *stare decisis*.

The application of Lincoln's views to *Stenberg*, and to the Court's upcoming partial-birth-abortion cases, is clear. *Stenberg* did not reflect "the unanimous concurrence of the judges," but was a hotly contested 5-4 decision from which even Justice Kennedy—who continues to believe that the Constitution protects a right to abortion—vigorously dissented. In addition, and to put it mildly, *Stenberg* is not "in accordance with legal public expectation" and "the steady practice of the departments throughout our history." Rather, it is a still-recent and tendentious departure from prior decisions of the Court. It certainly has not received the approbation of the other departments of government. And this six-year-old decision has not—again quoting Lincoln—been "before the court more than once" or "affirmed and re-affirmed through a course of years."

Contrary to the ruling in *Stenberg*, nothing in our constitutional text, history, tradition, or structure supports, let alone compels, the conclusion that the American people may not affirm our commitment to decency and human dignity by rejecting partial-birth abortion. Nor does the judicial policy of *stare decisis* shackle the Court to such a horribly wrong precedent—be it *Stenberg* or *Dred Scott*. ♦

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The Sixth Year Slump

Bush may be down, but don't count him out

By Noemie Emery

Now in the sixth year of his crisis-wracked presidency, George W. Bush is perceived as being in desperate trouble, having spent the two years since his reelection falling all over his feet. His democracy project looks stalled, his drive to reform Social Security seems to have been a huge waste of effort, his response to Katrina was more like sleep-walking, his pick of his White House counsel to fill a Supreme Court vacancy caused cardiac arrest in his base. Opinions differ as to whether he is a dead duck, or merely a lame one. Democrats claim he is going the way of one-term fiascos Carter and Hoover, who not only failed in themselves, but also ushered in long years of dominance by the opposite party. History, however, suggests something different: that sixth-year pain is nothing but normal, and has been shared in some way by all two-term presidents; that the judgments made of presidents in their sixth years of office (and in their seventh and eighth years, for that matter) have not always stood up over time.

Since 1933, eight different men have served more than one term in office, and all had some measure of grief. Franklin Roosevelt had not been sworn in after his historic 46-state blowout reelection in 1936 when he began plotting his court-packing project, a power-grab so blatant and so poorly crafted that it horrified even his friends. It was with his judgment newly in question that autumn that the country began to slip back into recession, something his nostrums did little to mollify. Unemployment, which had dropped from 25 percent to 9 percent in his first term, did a U-turn and climbed back to 19 percent, suggesting that he had been less than adept at dealing with the Depression. As a result, his party lost seven seats in the Senate in the 1938 midterm elections and 72 seats in the House. Widely believed to have run out of options, and increasingly frustrated at his inability to rouse the country to face the threat he saw rising from foreign aggression, his fortunes (and the country's) would not recover until the war itself began to emerge as an issue, calling both to rise to new heights.

Dwight Eisenhower, who would help win that war for FDR, would face similar woes as a second-term president. In October 1957, the Russians launched Sputnik, a shock to a country accustomed to seeing itself as the unchallenged leader in science, and one that gave credence to the charges later made by John F. Kennedy that Ike's administration had grown too complacent. At the same time, the country was hit by the worst recession since the end of the Second World War. In November, the president suffered a stroke. In May 1958, his vice president was almost killed by a mob while on a goodwill mission to Latin America. That June, his chief of staff, Sherman Adams, was revealed to be involved in a bribery scandal. That November, his party would suffer calamitous losses, ending up on the short end of almost two-to-one margins in the statehouses, the Senate, and the House. On May 1, 1960, just prior to a great power summit, an American spy plane was shot down over the Soviet Union, and after the administration had denied the existence of both the plane and the mission, Russians displayed the captured pilot on television, and the wreckage of the plane in Gorky Park.

But FDR and Ike were the lucky ones. Lyndon Johnson, a great Senate leader, widely acclaimed in 1965 for his performance in filling out the truncated term of John Kennedy, was so widely reviled by 1968 that he was forced into early retirement. Richard M. Nixon would bug his own office, and then tape himself plotting a cover-up. Bill Clinton, aware of his own lively past, would be so eager to placate his feminist allies that he would let his Justice Department push for ever-broadening definitions of sexual harassment, then the left's weapon of choice for the destruction of enemies. When caught in the trap he had carelessly fashioned, he chose to lie under oath. Clinton survived, but his gravitas quotient would never recover. In 2000, he would be a drag on his vice president, and since then his political interventions have been a mixed blessing for his party.

Few had the second term blues more than did Reagan and Truman, and in no two cases did the ultimate verdict of history differ more greatly from the assessments proclaimed at the time. In his own day, few

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people were wild about Harry, who had problems as soon as he took office, and whose election two years later came as a shock to everyone but himself. But his real problems began in August 1949, when the Soviet Union detonated an atomic bomb, and intensified three months later when the Chinese Nationalists, backed by the United States in their battle with the Communist rebels, decamped to Taiwan. There was nothing Truman could have done to prevent these developments, but he was blamed for them, and his poll numbers sank. The political climate turned toxic, and he was not helped the next year by bribery scandals, which he handled badly. But nothing would hurt him like the war in Korea, in which Truman felt obliged to repel North Korea's June 1950 invasion of the South, establishing the precedent that open Communist aggression would be met by armed force. The war began well but was then plagued by a series of blunders, and did not end until three years later, in a stalemate, at the cost of 37,000 American lives.

Then, "it was the GOP that dripped venom on a war commitment," writes the *Wall Street Journal*'s Daniel Henninger. "The Republican National Committee built its midterm campaign around 'blundering' in Korea. . . . A year later, some 66 percent of Americans wanted to withdraw from Korea, and the following year Truman's approval numbers fell to some of the lowest levels ever recorded by Gallup, staying below 30 percent and cratering to 22 percent in February 1952." Four years after Truman left office, Richard H. Rovere, the voice of the American establishment he so wittily satirized, would call the war "unjustified," for all its high purpose. "It is probable," he wrote of Truman and his advisers, that "they were not fully aware of the fact that they were leading the country into the most hated war in its history. . . . A large part of the case against the Korean war—seen from this perspective in time—was that it was so divisive and so productive of hatreds and bitterness that it might very well have been better never to have become involved."

A few decades later, Korea came to be seen as a critical turn in the Cold War, ending invasion as a weapon of Soviet strategy. And the failed haberdasher from Independence, Mo., was on his way to being bracketed with the faded film star from Eureka and Hollywood as the two presidents who did the most to win the Cold War.

In his second term, that film star also seemed the consummate fumbler, having started his presidency off in the time-honored fashion by shooting himself in both feet. He accepted the ill-advised job switch of Treasury Secretary Don Regan for the more gifted James Baker, his first term chief of staff, ending up with a chief of staff who was both crude and arrogant. A trip to honor the "boys of Pointe du Hoc" on the 40th anniversary of D-Day stood out as one of the high points of his first term; a second-term trip to a German war cemetery was a disaster, when it turned out that senior SS officers were buried there. His chief message guru was convicted of perjury. He took a bath in the 1986 midterms, losing the Senate to Democrats. But nothing would harm him as much as the Iran-contra scandal, which reads now like an opera bouffe production, but was considered so serious when it broke just after the '86 elections that the word "impeachment" was uttered.

In their book *Landslide*, published in 1988, Jane Mayer, now of the *New Yorker*, and Doyle McManus, then and now of the *Los Angeles Times*, would devote 393 pages to the claim that Iran-contra had destroyed Reagan's career and his legacy, revealing him as the doddering fool and the cipher they had always known him to be. The curtain was down, they maintained, in a flurry of theatrical metaphors; the show was over, the makeup was off. "Reagan could still walk through the practiced motions of his office, but the performance would never be as convincing. It was as if the houselights had come on too early, the artifice laid bare." At the same time, his Latin American policy had unraveled: In Nicaragua, the contras' guerrilla army had begun to disintegrate, as the Sandinistas prepared for the inevitable victory. Reagan's summit in Moscow in the summer was portrayed as a failure, in which he surrendered his most cherished principles. He had lost everything, including his power to talk to the country. Clearly, the whole jig was up.

Mayer and McManus were hardly alone. In a collection of essays called *The Reagan Legacy*, also published in 1988, David Ignatius of the *Washington Post* would call Reagan a failure, a sheep in wolf's clothing, a Rambo afraid of the dark. "During the Reagan years, America often displayed a reality of weakness," he argued. "The rhetorical assertion that 'America is back' was accompanied in practice by an actual foreign policy that was often vacillating, ill-planned, and poorly executed. . . . The military build-up of Reagan's first term was immensely costly, poorly managed, and added only marginally to America's military readiness." His speeches were unduly bellicose; his diplomacy, when he used it at all, was lacking in nuance, and made Carter look masterful. "Foreign policy during the Reagan years was largely a holding action. . . . Because he concentrated so much on image . . . Reagan leaves behind an array of unresolved substantive problems." Ground was lost most in the Cold War, vis-à-vis a revitalized Soviet Union, in which a dynamic Mikhail Gorbachev was poised to run rings around the "stodgy" American leadership. The biggest chore facing Reagan's successor would be to "find a stable relationship with the new Soviet leadership," no easy chore in view of the harm done by Reagan's malfeasance and the "skillful

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and potentially dangerous" nature of the resourceful and wily foe.

With this sorry record, it was really no wonder Reagan was also politically spent. "As a commanding political force, Ronald Reagan was unmade," said McManus and Mayer. "When GOP voters were asked if they would vote for Reagan again, only 40 percent said yes." Polls taken that spring showed that most voters wanted the next president to "set the nation on a new direction"—a "blunt rejection" of Reagan's agenda, and surely of Reagan himself. Yet in November 1988, Reagan's vice president beat Democrat Michael Dukakis by a seven-point margin. In November 1989, the Berlin Wall fell, taking with it the Communist empire. In 1991, the Soviet Union dissolved, and the formidable Gorbachev was a frightened man in captivity. Meanwhile, in Nicaragua, the Sandinistas lost in a free election to a center-right party, and El Salvador stabilized. When Reagan died in 2004, he would be eulogized as the liberator of Eastern Europe and Central America, and one of the most important leaders this country has seen.

There are myriad reasons second-term leaders tend to have oversized woes. There is the hubris that comes with reelection, the brain drain and fatigue that develop through long years in power, the scandals that come up as the in-party gives way to greed and temptation, the familiarity that breeds irritation, which now and then turns to contempt. The president's personal traits might have lost their appeal, and now seem annoying. His accent grates on those who don't share it. His rhetorical tricks have been used just a little too often. His ideas, which seemed promising, have not brought nirvana, and their downside is visible. The laws of unintended consequences have begun to kick in.

With all this, there also are reasons those who judge presidencies too early may falter: They don't know the whole story; they don't know the backstory; and they don't have the perspective that only time brings. If a week is a lifetime in politics, then six months or two years are an age. In mid-1988, no one could know that Reagan's last term would end on an upswing, one that would open the way for all that came after. In 1939, no one could know that Roosevelt, who seemed a spent force on his domestic agenda, would be ranked when he died, with Lincoln and Washington, as one of the great presidents of all time.

The backstory refers to the evidence that emerges years later, sometimes to surprising effect. The opinion held by some that Eisenhower and Reagan were dim bulbs used by others did not survive the release of their own private papers, which showed them as neither as warm nor as dim as their detractors assumed. Described as an "amiable dunce" by Clark Clifford (who was lucky to end his life in disgrace and not in prison), Reagan emerged as a distant man and a disciplined intellect, who over decades had refined the ideas that led him to revive the economy, put the skids under the Soviet Union, and transform the domestic political landscape in ways no one before him had dreamed.

Ike would also emerge as a leader who hid a cool and shrewd nature behind a bland affect and affable smile. "The Eisenhower of the declassified record *was* president," says Fred Greenstein, who has written of him as a "hidden hand" leader. "He was a keen political operator who engaged in the kinds of persuasion and bargaining many believed he left to subordinates," outsourcing controversy to aides (such as Vice President Nixon), keeping his image unsullied, and his poll numbers up. In 1958—in 1988—no one knew that Eisenhower and Reagan would emerge in their own words as shrewd and articulate. And no one could dream that Truman and Reagan, considered as being in over their heads by the glitterati of their respective eras, would be recognized years after it ended as the two men who won the Cold War.

With the fall of the Berlin Wall, and, later on, with the end of the Soviet Union, the presidencies of Truman and Reagan would fall into place at the two ends of a policy arc stretching over four decades, reaching from the proclamation of the Truman Doctrine in a speech of March 12, 1947, to Reagan's last meeting with Gorbachev, imposing order on events that had seemed random actions, connecting events that had seemed unrelated, or even had seemed to lack sense. As these presidential reputations rose, they pulled up behind them the lifetime achievements of Eisenhower and Kennedy, who, in the years before they were president, had been early, stalwart, and farsighted backers of Truman's containment policy and of the Marshall Plan. Reagan's and Kennedy's speeches were seen as intemperate, until they became inspirational. Before the Wall fell, Truman and Kennedy were seen in some quarters as prophets of overreach, goading the country into imperial folly in Asia and elsewhere. After it fell, they were seen as farsighted; the losses in Asia as road bumps in an overall grander design.

To report in the day is to walk in the woods, and to see each tree clearly, but to have little sense of the shape of the forest. To write in retrospect from the long view of history is to look at the woods from above, where the trees and their leaves all lose definition, but the lay of the land becomes evident. With George W. Bush, we are still very much in the forest, hacking our way through the day-to-day undergrowth. Final words at this point are not wise. ♦

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Why Is Ahmadinejad Smiling?

The intellectual sources of his apocalyptic vision

By Waller R. Newell

Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad is often smiling, as if he knows something we don't, or at least not yet. It is tempting to view him as a madman. That way, when he speaks of wiping Israel off the face of the earth, we might convince ourselves that he is no more than a fanatical front man for the Iranian Republic's desire to possess nuclear weapons so as to assert itself in the manner of China or any other aspiring great power.

Unfortunately, whether mad or not, Ahmadinejad has a coherent ideological vision in which the call to wipe out Israel is no ordinary manifestation of anti-Semitism. Instead, it is the beckoning of an apocalyptic event that will usher in a millennium of bliss for all believers, indeed all mankind. Nuclear weapons are the indispensable means to this end since they are the most reliable way of exterminating the Jewish state. They are therefore not to be negotiated away in exchange for other economic or security benefits. The revolution needs nuclear weapons to carry out its utopian mission.

How dangerous is Ahmadinejad? He has made his aims clear many times in public. At a "World Without Zionism" conference in Tehran in October 2005, at which his supporters chanted "Death to America," he said: "They [ask]: 'Is it possible for us to witness a world without America and Zionism?' But you had best know that this slogan and this goal are attainable, and surely can be achieved." At the same conference, he called for Israel to be "wiped off the map," adding that "very soon, this stain of disgrace will vanish from the center of the Islamic world. This is attainable." Iran's senior-most Islamic leaders gave their full support to this genocidal aim. Ahmadinejad has announced that he intends to return Iran to the purity of the revolution that brought the Ayatollah Khomeini to power in 1979. The annihilation of Israel, he claimed, was a goal first announced by Khomeini himself, thus a project endowed with the highest possible revolutionary authority.

We would do well to take the Iranian president seriously, for he is proving himself a charismatic and clever leader. As he demonstrated recently at the United Nations, Ahmadinejad is adroit at putting aside Islamist themes when convenient and joining secular dictators like Hugo Chavez and Robert Mugabe in their Marxist cant protesting American imperialism and economic hegemony. Like many totalitarian rulers, including Hitler and Stalin, he professes a love for mankind and world peace. In these ways, Ahmadinejad reflects the Iranian revolution's assimilation of traditional Islamic categories of faith to a Marxist lexicon of violent revolution. It is therefore more important than ever to realize that the Iranian revolution's brand of jihadism has close structural similarities to—and is historically descended from—strains of European revolutionary nihilism, including that of the Jacobins, the Bolsheviks, and the Nazis, and extending to later third world offshoots like the Khmer Rouge.

All of these revolutionary movements have a common set of genocidal aims, now reemerging in Ahmadinejad's lethal rhetoric. They all envision a return to what the Jacobins called the Year One, a grimly repressive collectivist utopia in which individual freedom is obliterated in the name of the common good, and people are purged of their vices, including property, freedom of thought, and the satisfactions of family and private life. Returning to a past so pure and distant requires the destruction of all received tradition, including religious traditions, extending back centuries, and so is, paradoxically, at the same time a radical leap into the future. That is why neither the purportedly Sunni vision of the Taliban nor the purportedly Shiite vision of the Iranian revolution bears any close resemblance to the traditions and restraints imposed by those faiths,

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especially restraints on this-worldly political extremism, terrorism, and the slaughter of noncombatants.

The second aim that all these revolutionary movements share is the identification of one class or race enemy whose extermination is the crucial step necessary to bring about the utopian community where all alienation and vice will end forever. The class or race enemy becomes the embodiment of all human evil, whose destruction will cleanse the planet. In Ahmadinejad's flirtation with nuclear Armageddon, the destruction of Israel plays the same apocalyptic role that the Nazis assigned to the destruction of European Jewry. Stalin assigned the identical role to the destruction of the "kulaks," the so-called rich peasants—an utterly fictitious category bearing no closer resemblance to actual Russian peasants than the Nazis' demonized Jews bore to actual Jews. Now it is the Jews' turn again. When Ahmadinejad promises Muslims "a world without Zionism," he means it quite literally.

A number of writers including Bernard Lewis and Paul Berman have stressed connections between al Qaeda and European ideologies of revolutionary extremism. The Iranian revolution's connections with these ideologies are, if anything, even better documented. The key figure here is the acknowledged intellectual godfather of the Iranian revolution, Ali Shariati. To understand Ahmadinejad's campaign to return to the purity of the revolution and why it leads him to flirt with nuclear Armageddon, it is necessary to understand Ali Shariati.

Ali Shariati (1933-1977) was an Iranian intellectual who studied comparative literature in Paris in the early 1960s and was influenced by Jean-Paul Sartre and Frantz Fanon. He translated Sartre's major philosophical work, *Being and Nothingness*, into Farsi, and coauthored a translation of Fanon's famous revolutionary tract *The Wretched of the Earth*. Sartre and Fanon together were responsible for revitalizing Marxism by borrowing from Martin Heidegger's philosophy of existentialism, which stressed man's need to struggle against a purposeless bourgeois world in order to endow life with meaning through passionate commitment. By lionizing revolutionary violence as a purifying catharsis that forces us to turn our backs on the bourgeois world, Sartre and Fanon hoped to rescue the downtrodden from the seduction of Western material prosperity. Fanon was even more important because he imported from Heidegger's philosophy a passionate commitment to the "destiny" of "the people," the longing for the lost purity of the premodern collective that had drawn Heidegger to National Socialism.

This potent brew of violent struggle and passionate commitment to a utopian vision of a collectivist past deeply influenced Ali Shariati, just as it had influenced another student in Paris a few years earlier, the Cambodian Pol Pot. Fanon in effect replaced the international proletariat of classical Marxism with the existentialist *Volk* of Heidegger's Nazi period, repudiating both liberal democracy and Marxist-Leninist politics as too materialistic. As applied in practice by the Khmer Rouge, this led to the bloodbath of 1975-1979 in which the cities of Cambodia were forcibly evacuated and the Cambodian people were purified of the taint of Western corruption by being reduced to a primitive collective of slave labor. Just as the the Jacobins had literally started the calendar over at the Year One, so Khmer Rouge leader Pol Pot, on assuming power, proclaimed the Year Zero.

Ali Shariati aimed to politicize the Shiite faith of his fellow Iranians with this same existentialist creed of revolutionary violence and purification. He sought to turn Shiism from pious hopes for a better world to come to the creation of a political utopia in the here and now. Although one cannot look into another man's heart and assess the sincerity of his religious beliefs, Ali Shariati's critics argue with some plausibility that Islam was in many ways no more than a religion of convenience for him. It was the most powerful social force in Iran, these critics contend, so Ali Shariati subverted its categories with a neo-Marxist agenda alien to true faith. Following Fanon, Ali Shariati believed that "the people" had to return to its most distant origins and so create what Fanon termed a "new man" and a "new history." Like Fanon as well, Ali Shariati defined a people as sharing "a common pain" inflicted on them by Western oppression.

Frequently citing Sartre, Ali Shariati proclaimed existentialism superior to all other philosophies because, in it, "human beings are free and the architects as well as masters of their own essence." This assertion of man's absolute control over his own destiny violates all three Abrahamic faiths, which stress that human beings are servants of God and powerless without Him. When Ali Shariati was criticized in 1972 by traditionalists among the Iranian clergy, he wrote to his father arguing that those who had fought French colonialism in Algeria like his teacher at the Sorbonne, Victor Gurvitch—also much influenced by Sartre and Fanon—were closer to the true revolutionary spirit of Shiism than traditionalists like the Ayatollah Milani, who avoided all involvement in politics.

Throughout Ali Shariati's discussions of Shiism, religion is harnessed to revolutionary politics. He tried to assimilate Shiites' hopes for a better world achieved through the return of the Hidden Imam, the Mahdi, to

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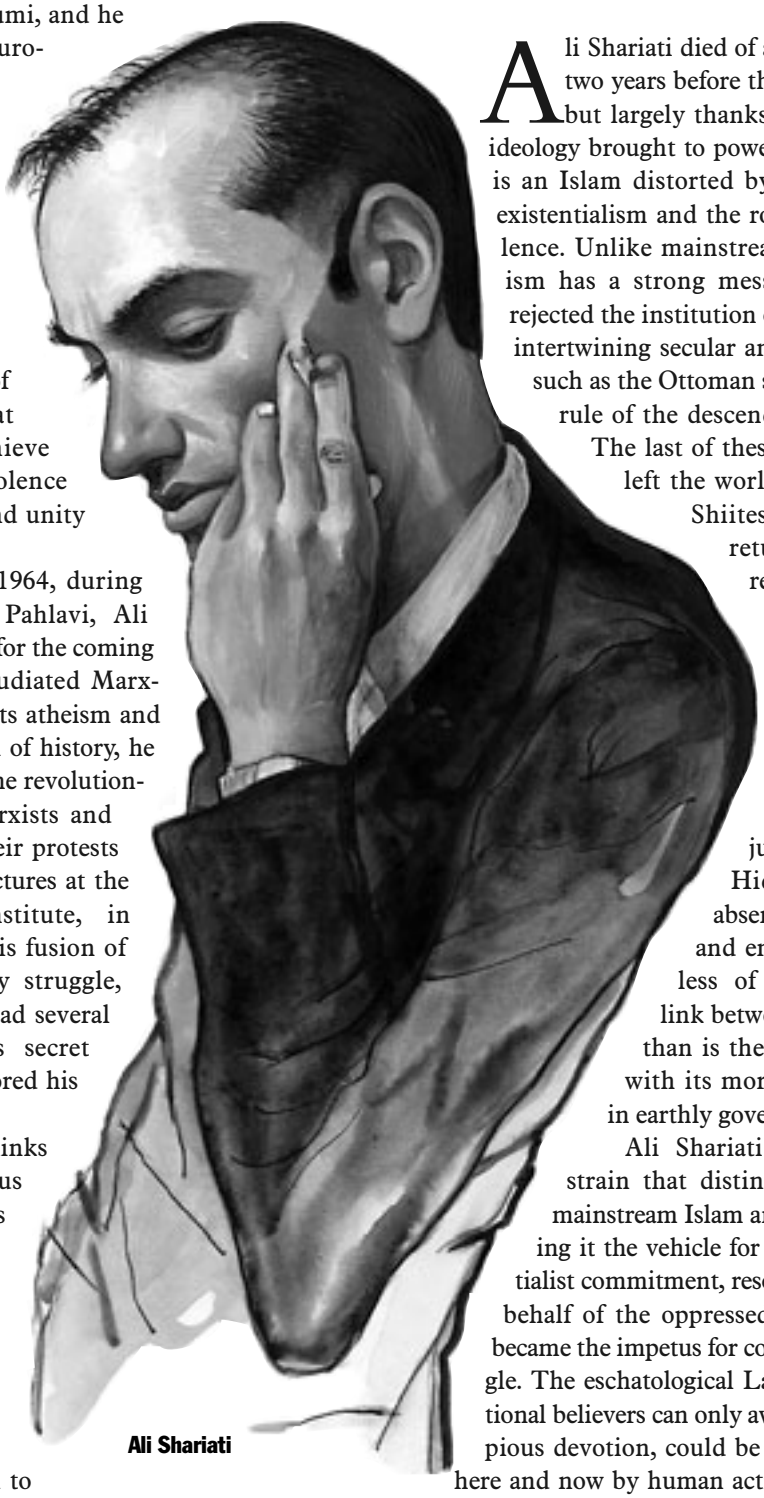
revolutionary agendas of mass struggle and historical progress. The return of the Mahdi, Ali Shariati proclaimed, will bring about "a classless society," a Marxist slogan. An unconventional Muslim at best, Ali Shariati was deeply interested in Sufi mysticism, including the poetry of Rumi, and he loved Balzac and other European writers. Like Sartre and later Michel Foucault, Ali Shariati had a passion for literature that seemed to go hand in hand with a passion for revolution. Political struggle becomes a beautifying myth of heroic valor and the triumph of the will, the delusion that "the people" can achieve through revolutionary violence the aesthetic wholeness and unity of a work of art.

Returning to Iran in 1964, during the rule of Shah Reza Pahlavi, Ali Shariati began to organize for the coming revolution. While he repudiated Marxism-Leninism because of its atheism and materialistic interpretation of history, he expressed admiration for the revolutionary fervor of Iranian Marxists and occasionally supported their protests against the regime. His lectures at the Hosseiniyeh Ershad Institute, in Tehran, which set forth his fusion of Shiism and revolutionary struggle, were wildly popular. He had several run-ins with the shah's secret police, SAVAK, who monitored his classes.

He also tried to forge links with the Iranian religious establishment. Many of its most reputable theologians continued to regard his attempt to blend Shiism with third world revolution as heretical. One important figure, however, refused to condemn Ali Shariati when called upon to do so in 1970 by his fellow clerics: the Ayatollah Khomeini. Khomeini and Ali Shariati were not direct allies. But Khomeini—who once said that "Islam is politics"—was no traditionalist either, and he wanted to harness the popular energy Ali Shariati had stimulated among Iranian students to help fuel his own political movement.



Ali Shariati

Illustration by Earl Keleny

Ali Shariati died of a heart attack in 1977, two years before the Iranian Revolution, but largely thanks to his influence, the ideology brought to power by Khomeini's rule is an Islam distorted by European left-wing existentialism and the romanticization of violence. Unlike mainstream Sunni Islam, Shiism has a strong messianic strain. Shiites rejected the institution of an earthly caliphate intertwining secular and religious authority, such as the Ottoman sultans, in favor of the rule of the descendants of the Prophet. The last of these, the Hidden Imam, left the world in 874, and devout Shiites faithfully await his return. When he does return, he will lead the righteous in a war against the wicked and establish a kingdom of perfect justice on earth. In the meantime, since the prospects for true justice reside with the Hidden Imam, in his absence the world is a sad and empty place, providing less of an institutionalized link between believers and God than is the case in Sunni Islam, with its more direct involvement in earthly government.

Ali Shariati took the messianic strain that distinguishes Shiism from mainstream Islam and secularized it, making it the vehicle for Heideggerian existentialist commitment, resolve, and willpower on behalf of the oppressed people. Messianism became the impetus for collective political struggle. The eschatological Last Days, which traditional believers can only await in faith, hope, and pious devotion, could be brought about in the here and now by human action, creating a regime capable of achieving the purity of the collective, the return to the Year One.

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In traditional Shiism, the blessings of the return of the Hidden Imam cannot be hastened by this-worldly political action. Because of the vast gap between the imperfect world of now and the perfect realm to come when the Hidden Imam returns, there can be no earthly government of mere men claiming to rule directly on behalf of the faith. That is why the very notion of a ruling mullocracy is a distortion of Shiism, which is even more skeptical about the idea of an earthly religious authority than is Sunni Islam with its tradition of the caliphate. The present Iranian theocracy, with its ceaseless drive for the centralization of power and regimentation of every aspect of life, is a departure from traditional Islam but bears a strong resemblance to the totalitarian party of the Jacobins, Bolsheviks, Nazis, and Khmer Rouge.

Since Ali Shariati died before the revolution, we cannot know for certain what his reaction would have been to the Ayatollah Khomeini's reign of terror. Would he have been appalled, disillusioned, or willing to hang on and give the revolution a chance? Some argue that, with his third world socialist credo, Ali Shariati was not, strictly speaking, a Khomeinist or supporter of theocracy. But how much of a genuinely Islamic ruler was Khomeini himself? Before him, ayatollahs had never wielded the instruments of state power to execute thousands of ideologically defined enemies, force hundreds of thousands into exile, confiscate property, and launch wars. As Bernard Lewis has observed, "all this owes far more to the examples of Robespierre and Stalin than to those of Muhammad and Ali. These methods are deeply un-Islamic; they are, however, thoroughly revolutionary." Before Khomeini came to power, direct political authority had never been exercised by the men of religion. The Iranian mullahs did not restore an ancient order. Rather, following Ali Shariati and Fanon, they tried to create a "new man" and a "new history" through a dictatorship with no Islamic precedent.

In his murderous fantasy of destroying Israel, Ahmadinejad has drawn together all the strands of Ali Shariati's jihadist ideology and added his own contribution, which makes it far more dangerous. Although a utopian in his belief that a politicized Shiism might bring about a regime in which the dignity of the people could be rescued from the corrupting influences of the West, Ali Shariati did not contemplate, as far as one can tell, actually bringing about the Last Days, the apocalyptic struggle between the righteous and the wicked, through a worldwide military cataclysm. Ahmadinejad apparently does. "Our revolution's mission," he declared last year, "is to pave the way for the reappearance of the 12th Imam." A rumor denied by the government but widely believed in Iran holds that Ahmadinejad and his cabinet have signed a secret "contract" pledging themselves to work for the return of the Mahdi. Ahmadinejad believes that the apocalypse is imminent and that he can accelerate the divine timetable. He is not content, as a traditional believer would be, to wait for the Hidden Imam to return. He plans to *make* the Last Days come on his own schedule, by using nuclear weapons to destroy the wicked as soon as possible.

And in this, the cost to Iranians themselves is of no consequence. When Iran's Islamic leadership—including supreme religious leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and Ayatollah Ali Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani—hastened to support Ahmadinejad's call last October for Israel's annihilation, Rafsanjani, a former president of the Islamic Republic, added a mad detail: The Iranian leadership would be happy to see Iran devastated by an Israeli nuclear retaliatory strike if it meant they could wipe Israel off the map. "The application of an atomic bomb," Rafsanjani sanguinely remarked, "would not leave anything in Israel, but the same thing would just produce damages in the Muslim world."

This willingness to see Iran absorb the "damages" of an Israeli nuclear response (surely millions of casualties) is only a variation of Hitler's willingness to divert resources needed to win the Second World War and expose Germany to catastrophically destructive bombing and invasion in order to speed up the Holocaust. Hitler was willing, even thrilled, to see Germany go down in the flames of his own *Götterdämmerung* in exchange for the chance to kill millions of Jews. Something of the same demented mirth sparkles in Ahmadinejad's eyes as he makes his cryptic little jokes about coming "surprises."

He does not represent all political forces in Iran, not even all radical forces. Doubtless, Iran's acquisition of nuclear weapons is, for many Iranians, a question of traditional national pride or a bid for great power status. But as long as he is president, Ahmadinejad represents an important dimension of the Iranian revolution we cannot afford to ignore. As long as Iranian policy is dominated by Ahmadinejad and his allies among the senior clerics of the Islamic Republic, Iran cannot be negotiated with. Their commitment to the destruction of the Jews is a matter of principle, just as the implementation of the Holocaust was for the Nazis and the liquidation of the kulaks was for the Bolsheviks. Genocide through nuclear weapons is designed to bring about the happiness of the Year One for all of us. I believe that is why Ahmadinejad is almost always smiling. ♦

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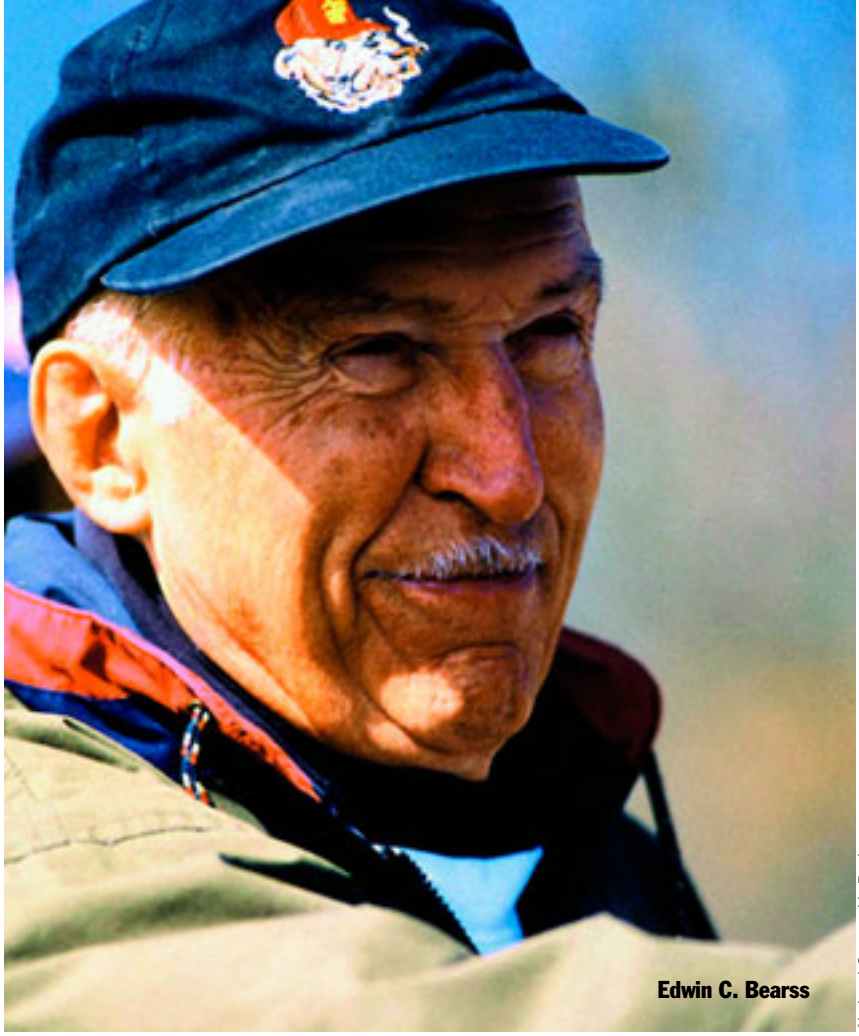
Man o' War

Up and down the battlefields with Edwin Bearss

BY ANDREW FERGUSON



Edwin C. Bearss

National Geographic Books

I don't think anyone knows who the first person was to earn a living as a guide to Civil War battlefields, but no member of that charmed profession has achieved the fame or longevity of Edwin C. Bearss (pronounced *Barsssss*), who captained his first lucky group of tourists around Vicksburg in 1955 and can still be found, from one weekend to the next, at one battlefield or another, leading a fanny-packed and be-visored platoon of customers into the pleasures of vicarious combat.

Over the last 50 years, like most enduring enterprises, Ed has diversified. This year alone he's taken several hundred people on tours of Anzio and Messina in Italy, the Oregon Trail in Idaho and Nez Perce encampments in Montana, scenes from the Mississippi floods of 1927 and from Abraham Lincoln's service in the Black Hawk War in the 1830s—on top of a schedule already filled with your basic Antietams, your Gettysburgs, your Shilohs and Chickamaugas and Spotsylvanias. He also found time to celebrate his 83rd birthday.

But Ed's first and last love is for the Civil War, and this, along with his standing in the trade, gives an air of inevitability to the publication of *Fields of Honor*. Somebody was going to have to put out this book sooner or later. For the last several years members of the self-named Bearss Brigades—a particularly tenacious species of the genus Civil War Buff—have armed themselves with tape recorders and gone chasing after Ed as he charges over the battlefields, hoping to preserve for the ages his incomparable observations and narrative spiel. Dozens of volunteers have transcribed the hundreds of hours of tape into thousands of pages of prose, and from these, culled and whittled, have come the 13 chapters of the book, offering definitive commentary on engagements from Fort Sumter to Appomattox. The literature of the Civil War is vast, of course, and nearly limitless in its variety of literary forms; but even so, I don't think there's another book quite like *Fields of Honor*.

Fields of Honor
Pivotal Battles of the Civil War
by Edwin C. Bearss
National Geographic, 464 pp., $28

And the reason is—forgive me if I sound like a Bearss Brigadier for a moment—there's never been a Civil War authority quite like Ed. Growing up on a ranch in Montana, he christened his favorite cows Antietam and Sharpsburg. His father was a Marine, and so was a cousin—"Hiking Hiram" Bearss, as the newspapers called him—who earned the Medal of Honor during the Philippines Insurrection and became, up to that time, the most decorated Marine in the history of the corps. Hearing their experiences led the boy to read every book he could get hold of about war. And when a real war made itself available, after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, Ed enlisted and became a Marine Raider. He was sent to the Pacific theater, moving from the Russell Islands to the Solomon Islands to the assault on New Britain. His fellow Marines remember him for his

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Bart Allen

Petersburg National Battlefield

almost empty backpack, containing only a few grenades, extra ammunition, and a copy of the *World Book of Knowledge*.

On patrol in New Britain one January morning in 1944, he was nearly shot to pieces. Approaching a stream, he and another scout couldn't see the Japanese pillboxes dug in just below the lip of the declivity leading to the creek bed. I asked him once what his own battlefield experience had taught him as a guide, and he said, with a small grin, "The importance of terrain." And it's true. Walking a battlefield with Ed, you're struck by how intently he wants you to see the landscape as the combatants saw it: What ordinary soldiers could and couldn't see from any given position often determined the course of battle.

In 1944, a trick of the terrain enabled the Japanese gunners to catch him by surprise. He took bullets in his ribs, heel, buttocks, right shoulder, and left elbow. Marines who came to fetch him were pinned flat themselves but managed, after several hours, to pull him from the line of fire—dragging him with their toes. He was two years in hospital. His left hand and arm don't do him much good, other than to help balance the riding crop he uses as a pointer when he's on a tour.

"I'm a man of the battlefields," Ed likes to say—and a man of one battlefield in particular, in Gloucester Bay, New Britain. "I know how a battlefield feels, sounds, and smells."

A sensitivity to terrain isn't all that distinguishes Ed as guide and author. During his convalescence, and later as a student at Georgetown and Indiana universities, where the GI Bill treated him to an M.A. in history, he read everything on the Civil War and, from all appearances, forgot nothing. He denies he has a photographic memory, but he will say, "If I read something I'm interested in, it sticks in my mind."

The breadth of what he knows is astonishing. In his account of any battle, an Olympian view of strategy and politics commingles with personal details picked up from the letters and diaries of common soldiers. And he's never lost the grunt's earthy irreverence for higher-ups. Here, for example, he sets the scene for a confrontation between generals Jubal Early and the uxorious Richard Ewell, nominally Early's boss in the Army of Northern Virginia:

> Ewell is, as they say, dominated by petticoats, but his wife and his stepdaughters aren't here, so that means he can be bullied by Early, a self-confident and profane individual. Early is over six feet, but he has rheumatism and both walks and stands with a stoop. He chews tobacco. His beard is turning salt and pepper and it's stained yellow around the mouth from the tobacco spit.

When he's leading a tour, scattering such tidbits before his audience for hours at a time, Ed never consults a note. *Fields of Honor* captures his fluency, along with his learning, his offhand humor, and his facility in making a half-dozen narrative strands come out together at the end. But pleasing as it is, *Fields of Honor* is still just words on a page, and can't really convey what makes a Bearss tour a singular experience.

I spent the day with him earlier this summer as he clomped through the tufted fields of Spotsylvania, where in 1864 the Army of the Potomac, newly commanded by Ulysses S. Grant, fought Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia to a standstill that was notable, even by Civil War standards, for its sanguinary pointlessness. It was a bright, mild day, and Ed had a busload of buffs from Baltimore in train. Most were veterans of his tours, some even qualified as members of the Bearss Brigades, but you could tell that a few were new to the experience and unsure what to make of him.

Balding and stooped now with age, he wears his baggy cargo pants hitched high above the waist. His hiking boots are well-scuffed, and his T-shirt—the shirt this day said: "Once a Marine, always a Marine"—stretches taut over the muscular right side of his frame and hangs loose over the left. He wears a ball cap as protection from the sun, and a croupier's pencil mustache for a sporty touch.

His face is in constant motion, eyebrows rising, lower lip pulled out, eyes shut so that, as he once said, "I can see it all happening, right here in front of me." Then the eyes pop open and he takes off at a drill sergeant's trot, hustling his followers across open fields and into dark woods and out the other side onto the ruts of old farm-to-market roads. No matter how far ahead he gets, you can always hear him. His lungs fill like a bellows and exhale into a basso profundo that would be impressive in a man half his age.

"Here we are with the Fifth Maine!" he shouted to us, breaking into a jog a quarter-mile from Spotsylvania's Bloody Angle. "Forward! Forward! We're not under fire yet! See the dip in the land! The Third Georgia is just ahead, but they can't see us yet!" Other sightseers, scattered along a road in groups of twos and threes, lifted their heads and stopped to stare. One shouted, "Semper Fi, Ed!"

At last, Ed slowed up by a hump of

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earthworks, at the apex of the Angle, where on the evening of May 12, 1864, hand-to-hand fighting raged for 15 hours in a typhoon rain. "Here's what history will know as the Bloody Angle," Ed called out, showing no loss of breath. The Baltimoreans wheezed up behind him, the last of the stragglers arriving two or three minutes late. Ed's voice dropped almost to a purr: "Imagine what Johnny Reb sees." He swept his riding crop toward the horizon. "It's a big blob of blue coming his way, 40 ranks of men, and more still behind, a blob darker than hell."

Ed hoisted himself up on the earthworks. These ditches were dug in a panic, he said, by frightened men with spoons and sticks. He scratched the earth with the riding crop. "The earthworks form what they call 'mule pens,'" he says. "Tarheels and Alabamians crowd the pens. Yanks are atop the works. It will be man-to-man, hand-to-hand."

The riding crop was suddenly lifted skyward. "The Yanks use their bayoneted rifles as javelins!" Ed brought the pointer down. "The Confederates reach up and grab the Yankees by their collars and pull them down into the ditches where the rain gathers in pools and they use their rifles as clubs and they simply . . . "—here he shrugged a kind of cosmic, fatalistic shrug—"beat . . . them . . . to . . . death. The pool turns red."

"Oh dear," said a Baltimore lady next to me. No one else said a word, for fear of disrupting Ed's rhythm.

"The Yankees respond with kicks!" And Ed kicked down, first with one leg, then the other. "It is the most savage fighting of the war!" He kept kicking. "Nine thousand Union gone! Eight thousand Confederates! Read Grant's memoirs about the fighting. He's magnificent!"

I have read Grant's memoirs. And he is magnificent. But it's still just words on a page. When I think of Spotsylvania now, when I close my eyes and try to picture what it might possibly have been like, I prefer to think of Ed, towering over the earthworks, still kicking. ♦

Who Said What When

The rise and fall of the Valerie Plame 'scandal.'

BY ROBERT D. NOVAK

The publication of *Hubris* is filled with irony for David Corn, Washington editor of the left-wing *Nation* magazine. He was present at the creation of the Valerie Plame "scandal," which the enemies of George W. Bush hoped could bring down a president. Nobody was more responsible for bloating this episode. Yet Corn is coauthor of a book that has had the effect of killing the story.

Hubris
The Inside Story of Spin, Scandal, and the Selling of the Iraq War
by Michael Isikoff and David Corn
Crown, 463 pp., $25.95

Thanks to Corn's intrepid coauthor, *Newsweek* investigative reporter Michael Isikoff, *Hubris* definitively revealed then-Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage as my source that Joseph Wilson's wife, Valerie, worked for the CIA and suggested her husband's mission to Africa. Armitage, an internal critic of the administration's Iraq policy, did not fit the left's theory of a conspiracy led by Karl Rove and "Scooter" Libby to discredit Wilson as a war critic. Nor did it fit the overriding theme of Isikoff and Corn in depicting "spin, scandal and the selling of the Iraq war."

As a result, Corn has been frantic—in the *Nation*, on his blog, and all over television—to depict an alternate course in which Rove, Libby, and Vice President Cheney attempted, by design and independently, to do what Armitage purportedly accomplished accidentally. The introduction of *Hubris* states that Armitage's statement to me was (according to the deputy secretary's colleagues) "a slip-up by an inveterate gossip—but one that occurred alongside a concerted White House effort to undermine a critic of the war." This, the authors continue, "was a window into a much bigger scandal: the Bush administration's use of faulty intelligence and its fervent desire (after the [Iraq] invasion) to defend its prewar sales pitch."

This desperate attempt to resuscitate a dubious conspiracy theory falls flat, and undermines what seems to be the real reason for writing *Hubris*. While its reportorial tone gives the book a façade of objectivity, in fact it constitutes a broad assault on Bush, his administration, and his policies in the war against terrorism. That entails the retelling of manifold allegations of perfidy, so familiar that they grow tiresome. The book's only new element is what it reveals about the Plame case, and there they trumped their own ace by facilitating the source's exposure in advance of publication.

The book is also exceptional partly because its authors are so oddly matched. Isikoff, who views himself as nonideological and nonpartisan, led reporters in tracking Bill Clinton's Monica Lewinsky affair (recorded in his *Uncovering Clinton*). Corn is a stereotypical leftist activist without a nonideological bone in his body. His first book, *Blond Ghost*, was a vicious attack on the legendary CIA operative and Cold War hero Theodore Shackley, and the bias of his later work, *The Lies of George W. Bush*, is obvious from its title.

I can only imagine the debates that must have taken place between coauthors to determine the direction of this book. The resulting product is

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some of the investigator Isikoff and a lot of the ideologue Corn. *Hubris* is not an unmitigated apologia for the Wilsons, but it comes close.

Corn telephoned me on July 16, 2003, two days after publication of my Valerie Plame column. He was neither a dispassionate reporter seeking information nor a former colleague on CNN's *Crossfire*, where we maintained a relatively friendly relationship when he was a substitute liberal cohost in 1997-98. Instead, he was an impassioned, angry activist who accused me of "outing a CIA agent" and breaking the law. Since the *Nation* had never before been concerned with the protection of intelligence agents, I suspected political motives behind Corn's outrage. It was our final conversation. The last thing Corn wanted from me was additional information.

I did not know how closely Corn was connected to Joseph Wilson IV until Wilson's memoir, *The Politics of Truth*, was published in 2004. Wilson related that Corn called him July 17 "to alert me what Novak had done, or at least what the person who had leaked Valerie's name to him had done, was possibly a crime." By the *Nation*'s August 4 issue, Corn was writing that I, as a journalist, was not subject to prosecution. But on July 17 he clearly had conveyed the opposite impression to Wilson, who was the original source of Internet blather—continuing to this day—that I am a "traitor." (Wilson will be the featured attraction for the *Nation*'s annual cruise in December.)

I am most aggrieved that the book not only fails to use what I have written in my columns as my account of the case, but also distorts my position. I wrote that I had faced "a dilemma" on December 30, 2003, because Special Counsel Patrick Fitzgerald was going to confront me with waivers from every official who conceivably could have told me about Valerie Plame Wilson.

"I did not believe blanket waivers in any way relieved me of my journalistic responsibility to protect," I wrote last July 12. Since I could not reveal their names, I feared facing the same legal juggernaut that sent Judith Miller of the *New York Times* to jail.

The dilemma was resolved when Fitzgerald showed up to interview me with waivers only from my three sources. The prosecutor had learned their names on his own, so there was no use in not testifying about them. *Hubris* misrepresents me by saying my dilemma came *after* Fitzgerald appeared with the three waivers ("crunch time for Novak") and that I gave up their names under pressure from the special prosecutor. This is such a misreading of my clear account that it must have been derived from either sloppiness or malice.

In *Hubris*, Corn never comes to grips with the fact that Armitage could not be prosecuted under the Intelligence Identities Protection Act because Valerie Wilson was not a covert operative under the terms of the law. A 463-page book that is endlessly discursive does not seriously consider that she was no longer assigned to foreign missions because her cover already had been broken. It never even mentions the report that Mrs. Wilson had been outed long ago by the traitor Aldrich Ames.

Unlike Corn, Isikoff did seek information from me. My neighbor in a Washington office building a block from the White House, Isikoff for the past year pestered me with two queries. First, had I cooperated with Special Counsel Fitzgerald? I could say nothing, I told him, until I received permission from Fitzgerald. Second, Isikoff wanted me to confirm that Armitage was my principal source. I could say nothing one way or another about my source, I told him, until that source released me.

I don't know precisely how Isikoff flushed out Armitage, but *Hubris* clearly points to two sources: Washington lobbyist Kenneth Duberstein, Armitage's political adviser, and William Taft IV, who was the State Department legal adviser when Armitage was deputy secretary. This book's publication date was early September, but the Associated Press was getting close to identifying Armitage. I received a heads-up telephone call from Isikoff, vacationing in Europe, that his *Newsweek* editors had to rush publication of his Armitage disclosure. That finally forced Armitage's belated admission, freeing me to relate details.

Herein lie the disadvantages of writing a book about a moving story. This is not daily or weekly journalism, subject to addition, subtraction, and amendment. *Hubris* misses Armitage's assertion that he "thought" Mrs. Wilson worked at the CIA, information that he indicated was mere chitchat. I responded in a column that Armitage clearly identified her division at the agency and unmistakably signaled his expectation that I would write about her in my column. I set down my version of what Armitage said shortly after our meeting, while his reconstruction of words (that he first said he did not remember) was made two-and-a-half months later.

Nevertheless, there is little doubt in my mind that this book would have accepted Armitage's version instead of mine. That is because the conspiracy theorists have a vested interest. Although *Hubris* was written before Armitage admitted his role, explanations the authors got from his friends echo what he later said himself. The book concludes that "Armitage had seemingly mentioned [Mrs. Wilson] either to distance his department from the Wilson mission, or simply, to share a piece of hot gossip."

Just to make sure readers get the idea, 83 pages later, Corn and Isikoff declare: "Armitage feared that the White House would leak that Armitage had been Novak's source to deflect attention itself and to embarrass State Department leaders who had never been enthusiastic about the President's Iraq policy."

While *Hubris* was willing to forgive Armitage for leaking, I was given no such forbearance. I expected that treatment several weeks ago when I was shocked to learn from Isikoff that Corn was his collaborator. I suppose that it would have been much worse had Corn written the book by himself, but it was bad enough. I do credit Isikoff for at least one reference to my being an opponent of U.S. intervention in Iraq, and much more publicly than Armitage. Nevertheless, Corn cannot

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Joseph C. Wilson IV

Lev Nisnevitch

give up the idea that I was part of a White House conspiracy to discredit Wilson, even though nobody from the Bush White House ever contacted me about Valerie Plame. While others quoted in the book merely "said something," I am represented as having "claimed" or "insisted."

Irrelevant issues are dredged up to allege a conspiratorial relationship with Karl Rove. For example, *Hubris* goes far afield to imply that Rove was responsible for my column this year noting antiwar congressman John Murtha's connection with the Abscam scandal 26 years ago. In truth, at that point Rove (on the advice of his lawyers), had not spoken to me for over two years. (In fact, I was reminded of Murtha's past by two prominent Democrats, a former congressman and a former California party leader.) Corn wrote that "Murtha had been investigated by the FBI," not that he was an unindicted co-conspirator, which was the centerpiece of my column.

Such inconvenient facts, even entire subject areas, are frequently omitted. This is commonplace for a polemicist like Corn but not a careful investigative reporter like Isikoff. The book's effort to cleanse Wilson stoops to deception: It accepts at face value Wilson's self-described political nonpartisanship, asserting that he "was not considered a fierce Democrat or a Bush Administration foe" when he embarked on his mission to Niger, citing his 1999 contribution to George W. Bush. In that same year, Joseph and Valerie Wilson not only contributed $1,000 each to Al Gore's presidential campaign, but the former ambassador also served on the Democratic nominee's policy staff. This, surely, was known to the authors, who chose to ignore it.

They ignored a lot more, such as what the July 2004 report by the Senate Intelligence Committee's Republicans, unchallenged by the Democratic minority, did to Wilson. It undermined his conclusions (based on his African mission) that Iraq did not seek yellowcake uranium, and undercut his insistence that his wife did not suggest him to the CIA for that mission. After the Senate report, Wilson disappeared from the Kerry for President campaign, something that also goes unmentioned in this book.

A major factor in Isikoff's decision to collaborate with Corn presumably was the leftist journalist's close relationship with the Wilsons, which provided supposedly exclusive information on Valerie's CIA duties. But the information is mainly Wilson boilerplate. I am disappointed that so accomplished a reporter as Isikoff did not probe more deeply into exactly what Mrs. Wilson did at the Agency. He must have questioned the story that "Brewster-Jennings & Associates," a nonexistent, totally fictitious company publicly listed by Valerie as her employer, was a cover for many CIA operatives. He must have known that former *New York Times* reporter Clifford May had also learned that Mrs. Wilson worked for the CIA before my column appeared. None of this was explored by the authors.

I do credit Isikoff for rejecting the canard that the White House had been peddling the Valerie Plame story all over town (to at least six journalists) before it got to me. The book also identifies the "senior administration official" quoted in a *Washington Post* story as the source of the six-journalists story, and as saying that the White House was out for "purely and simply revenge" against Wilson. He turns out to be Adam Levine, an obscure, middle-level communications aide who soon left the White House.

In their tirade against the Bush White House, Isikoff and Corn found a hero: Paul Pillar, then the CIA officer in charge of the Middle East. During the 2004 election campaign, I wrote in a column that Pillar was delivering off-the-record briefings to citizens groups around the country, and was highly critical of the president seeking a second term. Probing such subversion at the CIA might have been an interesting exercise for an investigative reporter, but that is not what this book is about. ♦

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The Morning After

Intellectuals and the collapse of the Soviet empire.

BY RONALD RADOSH

Twenty-five years ago, Paul Hollander wrote the path-breaking *Political Pilgrims*, a study of how scores of Western fellow travelers projected their hopes and dreams onto various totalitarian nation-states, and came back echoing Lincoln Steffens's famous claim, upon returning from the Soviet Union, that he had "seen the future and it works." Now, Hollander has turned his critical eye on a more fundamental yet connected phenomenon: How intellectuals and self-proclaimed revolutionaries have dealt with reality after the dream they so long believed destroyed themselves.

The End of Commitment
Intellectuals, Revolutionaries, and Political Morality in the Twentieth Century
by Paul Hollander
Ivan R. Dee, 416 pp., $28.95

The views of the people he discusses here fall into two categories: Those whose commitments and beliefs—mainly in the Communist variant of "socialism"—remain intact despite the collapse of the societies they had believed embodied those ideas; and those who, in the face of what to most people was self-evident, undertook a wrenching reexamination of their views. (And here I must note that the author treats my own journey from the far left in a brief section.)

Hollander studies the roots of disillusionment in communism by looking at those who lived and developed their beliefs in the former Soviet Union and other Eastern European Stalinist states; those who came by their ideology in the Marxist-influenced Third World—Cuba, Nicaragua, Vietnam, China and Ethiopia—and those who lived in what the New Left radicals used to call "the belly of the beast," in the advanced capitalist West, whose political system and democracy they despised, but who nevertheless availed themselves of its freedoms to promote their revolutionary agenda.

Of course, communism was a faith, a secular religion which provided its adherents a total belief system and a set of values—hence the terms "heretic" and "renegade," which are regularly used by the custodians of dogma against those who have begun to have second thoughts. The neo-Trotskyist historian Isaac Deutscher once titled an essay "Heretics and Renegades" to chronicle those he opposed who had quickly moved from minor heresies to complete rejection of Communist ideology. Despite the fact that Deutscher himself was considered by many followers of Stalin to be a renegade, that did not stop him from wielding his polemical axe against writers like George Orwell, whom he hated because Orwell defended the freedoms of the West and was fiercely anti-Soviet.

Nothing was more important for men like Deutscher than always to be known as a loyal man of the left; no proven crimes of Stalin or Mao could ever be enough to justify moving away from the insular world to which they had committed themselves. Orwell once quipped that some beliefs are so stupid that only an intellectual could hold them. What Hollander reveals is that some intellectuals were people like the self-proclaimed "contrarian" Christopher Hitchens, whose faith was only temporary and who bravely joined the ranks of those committed to the truth. Others, unfortunately, are like the celebrated British historian Eric Hobsbawm, whose unrepentant leftism and unabashed love for the Soviet Union remains intact. This is a man, writes Hollander, "who has held on to his convictions in face of the vast accumulations of historical evidence that should have undermined them." Hobsbawm acknowledges that the Soviet "experiment" led to millions dying; but that makes no difference, he has argued, since there was a chance that a new world *might* have been born *had* it succeeded.

It is no surprise that a true believer does not change in the face of reality; what is shocking is the appreciation and rewards bestowed upon Hobsbawm for remaining true to the totalitarian temptation. Hollander's analysis of what makes someone like Hobsbawm, clearly a smart and learned man, continually affirm his old faith is among the tightest and sharpest writing in the book. He reveals how Hobsbawm regularly subordinates "intellect to emotion," his beliefs predicated upon "the appeal of good intentions . . . a future superior to the present." He maintains his "abiding and profound loathing of capitalism," his contempt for which is only exceeded by his hatred for Israel, which Hobsbawm sees as a "militarist, culturally disappointing and politically aggressive nation-state." For all of this, Hobsbawm holds over 20 honorary degrees, is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, is feted the world over, and has been honored by the British government.

Hollander's discussion suggests that, for many in the West, being true to your early ideals—however deeply flawed—deserves praise and support, while to become disillusioned merits only disdain and hostility. Those who did not have the chance to believe in the workers' paradise were those who actually lived in the midst of "really existing socialism," the reality being so far from the promise that it could not but affect the belief systems of honest intellectuals. Meanwhile, those living in the West enjoyed the benefit of the freedoms of their societies, and the tolerance of those who disagreed with them, and were insulated from the

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stark reality of life in Communist regimes.

Hollander catalogues a long list of the defectors and the disillusioned, among others, such early defectors as Alexander Orlov and Victor Kravchenko, the latter-day dissident Lev Kopelev, and the one-time high-ranking Soviet official, Alexander Yakovlev. In all their cases, the discrepancy between appearance and reality was too much to handle. These were men of high moral values, whose despair at what they were doing in the system overrode their human desire for material well-being. Others who declined to follow their path knew the truth, but preferred the various perks given to *apparatchiks* who played the game.

When Hollander shifts his focus to Third World socialism, readers learn how the duplicity and deception of the Communist regimes in Vietnam and China led to brave decisions to resist. In those places, acknowledging the truth meant not only deprivation, in the form of loss of access to special goods, food stores, and homes, but sometimes imprisonment under the harshest of circumstances.

Most interesting is the incredible story of Sidney Rittenberg, born in 1921 and now living the good life, where he serves as a consultant to American corporations that seek to do business with China. An American GI during World War II who served in China and stayed there to join the ranks of Mao's troops, Rittenberg ended up being arrested twice as an American spy.

His first arrest came in 1949, when he was put into prison and subject to "re-education" until 1955, when he was released and told his arrest had been a mistake. Rather than leave and return home, his release reaffirmed Rittenberg's belief in communism, and he proceeded to rise in the ranks of Mao's hierarchy, becoming a top propagandist for the regime with a good home, car, and driver.

His single goal was to prove himself Redder than Red, to show the Chinese that he was a loyal Communist. It didn't work. Supporting both the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution, Rittenberg soon found himself one of its chief victims. In 1968, he was arrested in the middle of the night, and thrown into solitary confinement for 10 long years, only to be rehabilitated and released after Mao's death. A quintessential true believer, Rittenberg finally acknowledged that power had corrupted his beloved Chinese Communists. But history has its ironies. In Rittenberg's own words, he now makes a lot of money as "a sage and guide to the capitalist class," living in "relative splendor" in a beautiful home with a hot tub and gazebo in Seattle's finest neighborhood.

In Cuba and Nicaragua, Hollander tells the story of dissidents like Carlos Franqui and Heberto Padilla, the high-ranking defector Rafael del Pino, and the Nicaraguan writer Gioconda Belli, all of whom began by believing the myth of revolution, quickly learned that the reality was political repression enforced by the Communist leadership, and who saw firsthand that men like Fidel Castro were not selfless saints but megalomaniacal leaders who brooked no dissent and demanded total control over all aspects of personal and social life.

Turning to America and the West, Hollander produces the most satisfying section of his study. One might assume that the West would have had many more people who were disillusioned than those who were born into Communist states and for whom rejection of the system bore a greater price. But precisely because they lived in countries like the United States or Britain, the opposite was true: Living in prosperous democracies allowed these true believers to hold onto their illusions, given that the reality of "really existing socialism" existed only in their own minds.

Hence the strange case of the novelist Howard Fast. Fast first left the movement after Khrushchev's 1956 secret speech, and wrote a book about his disenchantment, *The Naked God* (1957). But decades later he rewrote it and published *Being Red* (1990), in which Fast reconsidered his early defection and emphasized instead what Hollander calls his "persecution as a Communist in the United States." The second time around Fast attacked what he called "the stream of anti-Communist lies"—which he had earlier demonstrated were anything but lies, thus revealing "the difficulty of making a total, definitive break with a cause and a belief system" in which he had a large emotional investment. The reader comes away with a greater respect for the achievement of other Hollander subjects, such as Eugene Genovese, Doris Lessing, David Horowitz, and other onetime young Communists who had the courage to rethink their early commitment.

These writers were able to avoid the trap of worrying about what Hollander calls "the abiding apprehension about becoming inadvertently associated with enemies of the left"—a trap, he shows, that affected the late Susan Sontag. Sontag bravely spoke up in defense of Solidarity during the years of the Polish repression, but later backed away from developing her critique for a projected essay because, as she explained, she did not want to give "aid and comfort to the neoconservatives." Even 9/11 failed to move her.

Most of the Western individuals who refused to reevaluate their beliefs did not have the excuse of saying they did not know the truth about life in the Communist regimes. What gave them pause was their ability to rationalize and ignore discrediting experience and evidence, all in the service of resisting disenchantment. The most important of these was the fixation of long-term goals. Like Eric Hobsbawm, they still believed that these goals were valid and achievable, hence the ability (Hollander writes) to "overlook the moral quality and degradation of the means, the human costs exacted in the course of striving for the long-term goals."

Hollander's contribution to our understanding of all this is marked by the attention he gives to those who refuse to question their assumptions, people like William Kunstler, Noam Chomsky, Edward Said, Bill Ayers, Tony Negri, Ramsey Clark, and Alexander Cockburn. This comes at the book's end, leaving readers with a sense of despair at how many influential figures of our day maintain the ability to hold onto myth—out of a feeling, Hollander suggests, that "objects of dislike or hatred are far more important than what they liked or admired." ♦

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The Gould Standard

Wall Street's hard man with a soft touch.

BY KRISTIE MILLER

Bettmann / Corbis

Jay Gould, center

Jay Gould was blasted in his obituary as "a wrecker of industries and an impoverisher of men." But Edward Renehan's biography seeks to portray the railroad magnate and Wall Street financier as "an exemplary, successful, long-term CEO . . . skillfully steering all his concerns through choppy economic seas in the 1880s."

Renehan points out that Gould was no worse than contemporaries such as Cornelius Vanderbilt and John D. Rockefeller. He maintains that Gould got bad press, not only in his own time, but also subsequently, from "three generations of biographers." One scandalmonger advanced a partner's suicide by two years to make it seem that Gould had been the cause of the deranged man's death.

The Dark Genius of Wall Street
The Misunderstood Life of Jay Gould, King of the Robber Barons
by Edward J. Renehan Jr.
Basic Books, 352 pp., $30

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Perhaps, Renehan suggests, this is because Gould, unlike the Rockefellers and Vanderbilts, left no large charitable bequests. Instead, he chose to give anonymously during his lifetime, after the press mocked his good works as feeble attempts to atone for his financial sins. Gould also kept silence about his personal life, never trying to garner sympathy with his rags-to-riches backstory. "The fact of my father's poverty is not worth one dime to me," he told a persistent reporter. Clearly, only dimes, and not his personal reputation, had value for the man. But it is hard not to admire one who had so little talent—or patience—for "spin." Later he would say that he minded bad press only because "it came back on" his family.

Interestingly enough, many details of Gould's early life (he was born in 1836) come from Gould's testimony before Senate hearings on the relations between capital and labor in the 41st Congress (1869-1870).

From the beginning, Renehan shows that Gould was focused, hard-working, and sober, believing, he told a friend, that "happiness consisted not so much in indulgence as in self-denial." He avoided alcohol, tobacco, swearing, and gambling (except on Wall Street). His mother died when he was not quite five, a sister succumbed to tuberculosis, and Jay himself nearly died of pneumonia as a young man. A feeling that time was short drove him on, as did a frantic desire to escape his father's hardscrabble farm.

Horatio Alger could hardly have topped the picturesque story of Gould's first job as a surveyor, making "noon marks"—a line through a farmer's window that would be struck by the noontime sun, enabling him to set a clock. By the age of 21, Gould had come to realize that brokers "take what seems the smallest share" of an enterprise, "but is in fact the largest," since it was pure profit. He had found his niche.

Renehan admits that Gould could be an "unpredictable Wall Street pirate," but insists that, unlike the "sinister" Daniel Drew—aka the Great Bear because of his brilliant and disastrous stock manipulations—Gould used speculation on Wall Street "to take control of companies he could manage, improve and merge." In the 1880s, railroad companies offered the greatest potential for expansion.

Gould's first major undertaking was the so-called Erie War, a complicated tussle over railroad stock in which Gould and his partner, Jim Fisk, took on Vanderbilt and caught Drew in a "bear trap." Their titanic battle nearly eclipsed local press coverage of the impeachment trial of Andrew Johnson, and gave the pair of upstarts the "odd negative celebrity" of scoundrels who out-scoundreled the dastardly Drew. In the process, they unwittingly enriched many small investors.

Gould's next big enterprise was an attempt to corner the gold market. Renehan admits that Gould hoped to make a "speculative killing," but argues that Gould was also trying to build up the Erie's freight-hauling

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business by raising the price of commodities. Gould tried some underhanded influence on President Ulysses S. Grant and, on September 24, 1869, "Black Friday," bankrupted nearly a thousand individual investors. That he lost heavily himself did not prevent him from earning an "irretrievably tarnished reputation" from this escapade.

Renehan notes that Gould's legend as the "Mephistopheles of Wall Street" would besmirch his genuine subsequent achievements: taking control of the Union Pacific and building up a network of railways throughout the Southwest, garnering "hard-won profits" for shareholders. Gould displayed not only a genius for details but also an almost puckish sense of humor when he engaged in a rate war with Vanderbilt. When Vanderbilt dropped the per-carload rate for cattle to a "ridiculous" one dollar, Gould and Fisk bought up all the livestock coming into Buffalo and shipped it on Vanderbilt's line, realizing enormous profits.

In politics, Gould avowed that "in a Republican district I was a strong Republican, in a Democratic district I was a Democrat . . . in politics I was an Erie Railroad man every time." When General Custer died at Little Big Horn, Gould observed that its result would be to "annihilate the Indians & open up the Big Horn & Black Hills to development," greatly benefiting his concerns.

Renehan supposes a reader with some knowledge of business transactions. But he leavens the sometimes arcane financial shenanigans that involve bulls and bears, shorting stocks and watering stocks, with sketches of the entire pirate band—including Drew, Vanderbilt, the gaudy Jim Fisk, even Fisk's mistress, Josie Mansfield.

Renehan mentions time and again Gould's small stature, barely five feet, and physical frailty. Given Gould's enormous capacity for work, this seems somewhat irrelevant. More to the point is Renehan's account of Gould's behavior when Fisk, his friend and partner, was shot by a rival in love: Gould bowed his head upon his hands and wept "unrestrainedly with deep, audible sobs." Hardly the action of a monster.

Dark Genius offers a finely nuanced portrait of Gould, the eighth richest man in American history (adjusting for inflation, Gould outranks Bill Gates, J.P. Morgan, and Sam Walton) and delves into both his gaudy financial history and his quiet personal life. It also recalls to mind a poem about Captain Kidd in *A Book of Americans* (1933) by Rosemary and Stephen Vincent Benét: All the "newer history books," they wrote, "*say [Kidd] never pirated / Beneath the Skull-and-Bones. / He merely traveled for his health / And spoke in soothing tones.*"

Dark Genius goes to considerable lengths to show that Gould was a tender family man who wore simple suits and pottered in his garden, was loyal to his friends and generous to his personal staff. Gould often invited young employees to use his library; those who did were further helped with scholarships. He actually cultivated his negative image, quoting Machiavelli's advice from *The Prince* that it was better to be feared than to be loved. And he was always good for colorful copy, as when the *New York World* noted on one parlous occasion that Gould "seemed to contemplate the coming conflagration as serenely as if he had a complete monopoly of the trade in Lucifer matches and petroleum." ♦

Beautiful Dreamer

Henri Rousseau and the apotheosis of the Sunday painter. **BY MARTHA BAYLES**

You know the type. He's the guy at your high school reunion who just quit his job (dull to start with) and cut loose from his family (wife deceased, kids farmed out to relatives) in order to devote himself entirely to his art. And when you see that gleam in his eye, you don't need to ask what kind of art. This type never wants to be a conceptual artist, exhibiting piles of toenail clippings or streaking through the financial district on a skateboard. Nor an installation artist, re-creating his own grungy bathroom in an even grungier downtown gallery. And definitely not a transgressive artist, running dead rats up flagpoles or nailing plastic Nazis to a cross. The Great Artist wannabe is typically just that—a Sunday painter with no real training, who earnestly believes that hard work and exalted thoughts will turn him into Titian . . . or at least, Bouguereau.

Henri Rousseau: Jungles in Paris
National Gallery of Art

Did Henri Rousseau fit this bill? In a way, yes. It was definitely a clueless amateur who painted the dreary small landscapes of suburban Paris now filling one room of the Rousseau exhibition at the National Gallery. If you favor the postmodernist erasure of the line between high and low art, then you'll enjoy seeing daubs such as *The Environs of Paris* (1909), *Banks of the Oise* (1905), and *Ivry Quay* (1907) given the same royal treatment as the Venetian masters on display in the West Building. If you'd prefer not to see that line erased, then your reaction will be closer to that of the Paris Salon-goers who, accustomed to the lofty subject matter and polished technique of the Academy of Fine Arts, scoffed at Rousseau's doltishness.

At the same time, the early modernists—many of whom had been trained in the academic style, even as

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Art Resource

'Tiger in a Tropical Storm (Surprised),' 1891

they spurned it—praised Rousseau's art as "naive," "primitive," even "folk," meaning that it was ignorant of anatomy and perspective. Picasso, who had mastered classical draftsmanship under the tutelage of his father almost before he could walk, paid five francs for Rousseau's gawky *Portrait of a Woman*, and called it "one of the most truthful French psychological portraits." (It is probably worth remembering that five francs was chicken feed, and that Picasso was a Spaniard.) In 1908, two years before Rousseau's death, Picasso and Guillaume Apollinaire threw a banquet in his honor, attended by a who's who of the Parisian avant-garde. Accounts of that legendary event differ, but the overall tone seems to have been part mockery, part affection for the guest of honor who, 20 years older than anyone else present, had never aspired to be part of the avant-garde.

This exhibition does a nice job of highlighting the mismatch between the modernists' embrace of Rousseau and his own somewhat deluded self-image. Modernism back then was not the insulting joke that postmodernism is today. On the contrary, Rousseau's fan club included some of the most significant artists of the 20th century. But Rousseau had little use for their work. His hero was Bouguereau, the ultimate academic painter, and he bragged of having received advice from two others, Jean Gérôme and Félix-Auguste Clément. But no advice, however kindly or condescendingly given, could substitute for the rigorous course of study enforced at the Academy. (For example, students were forbidden to touch a paintbrush until they had completed several years of figure drawing and accumulated an acceptable portfolio.)

Rousseau's self-delusion is perhaps best revealed in John House's contribution to the catalogue, which recalls him "submitting designs to the competitions for the decoration of several of the town halls in the Paris region—those of Bagnolet, Vincennes and Asnières." As House adds, "town-hall decorations were perhaps the single most significant form of public-art patronage in France during those years." We can only imagine how quickly Rousseau's designs got shot down. And, ironically, how many tourists would now be trooping to any provincial town whose officials had been clairvoyant enough to commission a mural by Henri Rousseau!

Does this mean there's hope for our Sunday painter, even though his attempts at perspective give the viewer a migraine, and his renderings of the human body are, to quote Cole Porter, "less than Greek"? Perhaps—if he is immensely gifted, incredibly tenacious, and capable of following Rousseau's example, which was to find a way around his weaknesses, build on his strengths, and manage to live in the right place at the right time.

Take anatomy. Rousseau himself seems to have been nicely put together (by all reports, the ladies of his acquaintance thought so). But the same cannot be said of the human figures he painted. It is hard to attach any real artistic merit to his stabs at the formal black-suited portrait, a genre for which the standard was set back in 1524 by Titian's *Man With a Glove*. At best, Rousseau spoofs the genre, introducing such bizarre elements as the

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striped cat, red fez, and itty-bitty smokestacks in *Portrait of Monsieur X (Pierre Loti)* (1910). But at worst, his portraits bear more than a passing resemblance to the stiff, labored ancestor pictures that stare grimly from the walls of every preserved colonial homestead in America.

But Rousseau got around this problem by the ingenious device of dressing his human figures in fancy costumes and reducing them to decorative motifs, preferably in landscapes where his other weakness, a lack of perspective, had already been solved. In *The Banquet Years*, Roger Shattuck's superb study of *fin-de-siècle* Parisian culture, he compiles a list of Rousseau's finest works, including four jungle pictures (about which more below) and the stunning *Carnival Evening* (1886). (Full disclosure: *Carnival Evening* is not only my favorite Rousseau, it is also one of my favorite paintings, period.)

It's fascinating to see how this early canvas prefigures Rousseau's later triumphs. Rather than struggle to make his pair of carnival-goers lifelike, he transforms them into exquisite little dolls, dressed in pale garments that glow as luminously against the bare, black trees as the full moon and delicate clouds glow against the twilit sky. And strikingly, there is no perspective to speak of, because the line of the horizon has been brought as low as possible—suggesting a ridge, or the crest of a hill. Much has been made of the tiny grimacing face attached to the gazebo on the left, but that is not what makes this picture so haunting. Rather it is the dropped horizon, which creates an eerie emptiness behind the figures and the dark woods that loom at their back.

Ever since the artists of the 14th century read the Latin translation of Ibn al-Haytham's 10th-century treatise, *Optics*, Western painting has valued pictorial depth, or the illusion of three-dimensional space on a two-dimensional surface. The calculations required to create this illusion have evolved from Giotto's rudimentary algebra to the elaborate ratios worked out by Erwin Panofsky. But through it all, any malfunction of approved perspective has been called crude and backward. Obviously there's nothing crude or backward about great works created by civilizations that did not study perspective: medieval manuscripts, Chinese paintings, and Persian miniatures, to name a few. But these have, at times, been called *decorative*—or as the phrase goes when the intention is to disparage, *merely decorative*. In Rousseau's day, Cézanne's dismantling of perspective was being eagerly taken up by the cubists and other modernists. But that didn't stop them from condescending to Rousseau. After all, playing with or even subverting classical perspective was one thing; being totally incapable of using it was another.

But here, too, Rousseau proved resourceful. Rather than wrestle blindly with sight lines and vanishing points, his best paintings simply abandon the whole enchilada and find other ways to evoke a sense of distance. For instance, in most of the jungle paintings, depth is suggested either by color, with the greens in the background darker and more saturated than those in the foreground; or by scale, with fruits and flowers getting smaller the farther they recede.

And sometimes he uses neither. In *Fight Between a Tiger and a Buffalo* (1908), the colors are uniform, and despite a faint hint of horizon, the space is extremely shallow. Indeed, the oranges in the grass in front of the struggling beasts are the same size as those in the trees behind them. The bananas get bigger, but they do so from left to right, not from front to back—no doubt because Rousseau wanted to balance out what is essentially a flat composition. Are the best of the jungle pictures—*Tiger in a Tropical Storm (Surprised)* (1891), *The Hungry Lion Throws itself on the Antelope* (1905), *The Merry Jesters* (1906), and *The Snake Charmer* (1907)—decorative? You bet. Does that make them inferior to umpteen thousand academic paintings in which fully sculpted nudes writhe in deep illusionistic space? No way.

As this exhibition makes abundantly clear, Rousseau's images of tropical flora, fauna, and humanity came from popular magazines, travel books, the Paris botanical garden and zoo, and the 1889 World's Fair, which featured 44 different ethnic and historical pavilions surrounding the base of the brand-new Eiffel Tower. Even at the time, it was obvious that Rousseau was taking a free hand, placing a Mongolian deer in the jungle (*The Waterfall*, 1910) and conjuring encounters not found in nature (*Tropical Landscape—An American Indian Struggling with a Gorilla*, 1910). But as Christopher Green writes in the catalogue, Rousseau's real accomplishment was to create a dream jungle, "a theater of fears and desires" for his fellow bourgeois Parisians.

It's nice to know that, after all those years of rejection and poverty, Rousseau finally made it big. His last jungle painting, *The Dream* (1910), is right up there with Leonardo's *Mona Lisa* and Van Gogh's *Sunflowers* as one of art's All-Time Greatest Hits. Certainly the National Gallery show is organized around this happy ending, with *The Dream* hung at the very end, where it attracts countless oohs, ahs, and contented sighs.

Too bad *The Dream* is not the culmination it is chalked up to be. It is weirdly academic, in the sense that it is crammed with everything you could possibly want, all the goodies in Rousseau's bag of tricks, plus a nude. But it is not thrilling and (dare I say it?) not beautiful. If you want to see Rousseau's most beautiful jungle painting, go back to the first, *Tiger in a Tropical Storm (Surprised)*, painted 19 years earlier. Compare that fabulous canvas, full of gorgeous color, movement, and pattern, with the formulaic jungle paintings in the room just before *The Dream*, and you'll see a definite decline. The painful truth is that Rousseau's career peaked early, with a handful of astonishing canvases in which he overcame his technical limitations and expressed something urgent and ineffable that had clearly been bottled up in his soul.

By the time he painted *The Dream*, success had turned to formula, and he was, as they say, churning them out. Question for a Sunday painter: How do you keep a dream alive after it has come true? ♦

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The Queen in Spades

A royal crisis and the British nervous breakdown.

BY JOHN PODHORETZ

Ostensibly, *The Queen* is about the untimely and tragic death of Princess Diana in a horrible 1997 car crash. It therefore comes as a surprise to discover that *The Queen* is a *comedy* about the machinations surrounding the decision by Diana's former mother-in-law, HRH Elizabeth II, to offer therapized words of clearly disingenuous comfort to a British nation gone demented and hysterical in the wake of the accident.

The Queen
Directed by Stephen Frears

Courtesy of Miramax Films / Laurie Sparham

But telling that rather dull story—in which the new prime minister Tony Blair must convince the monarch to break with the stiff-upper-lip tradition she represents precisely so that she can save the tradition of the monarchy—isn't what makes *The Queen* this year's most unexpectedly diverting cinematic entertainment. Rather, it's the struggle every character in the film must endure to maintain a modicum of dignity when the world is conspiring to turn them into slapstick stooges, slipping on banana peels.

The first people we see doing a battle with dignity in the film are Tony and Cherie Blair, as they are ushered into Buckingham Palace for a meeting with the queen, during which she is to make the ceremonial request that Blair form the new government. They are given instruction as they climb the stairs about how to behave in the "Presence"—bow the head, cross the room, bow the head again as the royal hand is extended for a quick shake. Blair, who is superbly inhabited by the stage actor Michael Sheen, tries to maintain his gravitas but still can't help looking like an overeager schoolboy. And his wife (the hilarious Helen McCrory) looks as though she is about to burst into giggles as she does a schoolgirl's curtsy.

Blair is clearly overmatched by Elizabeth, who has the stillness of someone who has spent her life affecting a facial expression that contains no information at all. Helen Mirren, who plays the queen, gives a triumphant performance that is almost certain to win her an Oscar next year precisely because she dares to do so little. Her Elizabeth isn't humorous, or wise, or condescending, or monstrous, or heroic, or loving, or warm, or cold. She is contained. And in her state of containment, Mirren conveys Elizabeth's towering dignity.

Elizabeth is, however, the only adult member of her family who doesn't seem faintly ridiculous. The Charles we see here is a caring father but a man so emasculated by his decades of waiting for the throne that he cannot bring himself to insist upon anything with his mother—whom he thoughtlessly wounds by praising his late wife's emotional connection to her children. He and his father, Philip, go out stalking a stag at the royal palace at Balmoral dressed in full Scottish regalia—which is, I'm sure, both entirely factual and completely hilarious. Meanwhile, Elizabeth's sour mother has, it turns out, spent a great deal of time planning her own funeral and is appalled to discover that her careful design is being hijacked for Diana's interment.

As for that interment, *The Queen* shows, without making much of a point of it, just how undignified and comic it was, too—the unutterable kitsch of an event characterized by the presence of A-list celebrities like Steven Spielberg, Tom Hanks, and Elton John entering the august precincts of Westminster Abbey looking more like dazzled tourists than grief-stricken mourners.

Director Stephen Frears and screenwriter Peter Morgan made a very tasteful decision to treat Charles and Diana's sons with great discretion. We see them only from the back, and they are the subject of much worried conversation between Elizabeth and Philip. The problem with this narrative choice, however, is that it blurs a central point about the week during which the royal family said nothing about Diana's passing: Elizabeth was concerned primarily with the well-being of her orphaned grandchildren. She says as much to Blair in an angry telephone conversation, but because we never see her interact in any way with William and Harry, her anger at his assertion that she should return to London seems unjustified and unreasonable. It's the only misstep in this exceptionally clever imagining of one of the weirdest moments in recent history.

The comic tone struck by *The Queen* makes it an entirely new kind of docudrama. Because it doesn't take itself too seriously, it doesn't seem to create the kinds of problems other fictionalized versions of real-world events do. Even in its softer and more moving moments, the movie still seems like a bit of a burlesque—a satire, albeit a very gentle one, and therefore something quite different from a disreputable work of pseudohistory. ♦

John Podhoretz is THE WEEKLY STANDARD*'s movie critic.*

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Parody

Archivists at the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library at Hyde Park, New York, discover fragments of a long-hidden 1918 Instant Message correspondence between Assistant Secretary of the Navy Franklin Roosevelt and Mrs. Roosevelt's social secretary, Lucy Mercer.

—News item

Western Union: Correspondents Register

FDR (Franklin D. Roosevelt)

AVAILABLE

LucyGoosey

LNR

Western Union: Instant Messages with FDR

LucyGoosey (8:16:27 PM): **u go 2 w house today???**

FDR (8:16:48 PM): **no!!! day of infamy!!!**

LucyGoosey (8:17:22 PM): **poor baby. prez mad at u? :(**

FDR (8:17:46 PM): **maybe ww dont like when I assert firm beliefs...**

LucyGoosey (8:18:03 PM): **maybe ww jealous????**

FDR (8:18:25 PM): **forgotten man in own w house!!!**

LucyGoosey (8:18:59 PM): **lol!! eleanor there?**

FDR (8:19:17 PM): **no problem.**

FDR (8:19:24 PM): **e dont suspect u. Only fear is fear itself.**

LucyGoosey (8:19:27 PM): **cool. my place or u?**

FDR (8:19:42 PM): **yr place. good neighbor. vy discreet.**

LucyGoosey (8:19:56 PM): **nice :-)**

FDR (8:20:20 PM): **cant wait 4 u. feeling ill-housed, ill-clad, ill-nourished.**

LucyGoosey (8:20:38 PM): **???**

FDR (8:21:06 PM): **gotta get 2 yr place asap. feel like arsenal of democracy.**

LucyGoosey (8:21:30 PM): **fully loaded???**

FDR (8:21:49 PM): **u gotta rendezvous w/ destiny babe**

LucyGoosey (8:22:17 PM): **cant wait!!!**

LucyGoosey (8:22:41 PM): **wut about e?**

FDR (8:22:58 PM): **eye have seen eleanor, n eye hate eleanor. :-p**

the weekly Standard

October 16, 2006

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